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SHAKSPEARE'S
KING JOHN.

WITH EXPLANATORY AND ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES

AND

NUMEROUS EXTRACTS FROM THE HISTORY ON WHICH THE PLAY IS FOUNDED.



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PREFACE.

OF Shakspeare's historical plays, *King John* is the first in the order of history. It is founded on an older play, first printed in 1591, entitled, 'The Troublesome Raigne of John, King of England, with the Discoverie of King Richard Cordelion's base son, vulgarly named the Bastard Fauconbridge; also the death of King John at Swinstead Abbey.'

Malone has observed that '*King John* is the only one of our poet's uncontested plays that is not entered in the books of the Stationers' Company.' Its name occurs in an enumeration of Shakspeare's plays in the *Palladis Tamia* of Francis Meres, 1598; and, accordingly, the date of its composition must have been somewhere between 1591 and 1598, probably not earlier than 1596, the year assigned by Malone. It was first published in the folio collection of 1623.

We believe that Shakspeare, in composing *King John*, partially consulted 'Holinshed's Chronicle'; but he was mainly guided by the action of the old play, and was thus made to deviate in several instances from authentic history, and to omit—what, perhaps, he would have included, had he made selections for himself from the old chronicler—a

reference to that great event in John's career, the signature of *Magna Charta*. The poet was contented with such incidents as he found in 'The Troublesome Raigne,' because it was, no doubt, a great favourite on the stage; but its faint and imperfect delineations of character were, by his wonderful genius and profound knowledge of human nature, rectified and developed into the most life-like, interesting, and instructive pictures.

REMARKS OF VARIOUS AUTHORS

ON

SHAKSPEARE'S 'KING JOHN.'

'The dramas derived from the English history, ten in number, form one of the most valuable of Shakspeare's works, and partly the fruit of his maturest age. I say advisedly *one* of his works, for the poet evidently intended them to form one great whole. It is, as it were, an historical heroic poem in the dramatic form, of which the separate plays constitute the rhapsodies. The principal features of the events are exhibited with such fidelity: their causes, and even their secret springs, are placed in such a clear light, that we may attain from them a knowledge of history in all its truth, while the living picture makes an impression on the imagination which can never be effaced.

'In *King John* the political and warlike events are dressed out with solemn pomp, for the very reason that they possess but little of true grandeur. The falsehood and selfishness of the monarch speak in the style of a manifesto. Conventional dignity is most indispensable where personal dignity is wanting. The bastard Faulconbridge is the witty interpreter of this language; he ridicules the secret springs of politics without disapproving of them; for he owns that he is endeavouring to make his fortune by similar means, and wishes rather to belong to the deceivers than the deceived, for in his view of the world there is no other choice. His litigation with his brother respecting the succession of his pretended father, by which he effects his acknowledgment at court as natural son of the most chivalrous king of England, Richard Cœur-de-Lion, forms a

very entertaining and original prelude in the play itself. When, amidst so many disguises of real sentiments, and so much insincerity of expression, the poet shows us human nature without a veil, and allows us to take deep views of the inmost recesses of the mind, the impression produced is only the more deep and powerful. The short scene in which John urges Hubert to put out of the way Arthur, his young rival for the possession of the throne, is superlatively masterly; the cautious criminal hardly ventures to say to himself what he wishes the other to do. The young and amiable prince becomes a sacrifice of unprincipled ambition; his fate excites the warmest sympathy. When Hubert, about to put out his eyes with the hot iron, is softened by his prayers, our compassion would be almost overwhelming, were it not sweetened by the winning innocence of Arthur's childish speeches. Constance's maternal despair on her son's imprisonment is also of the highest beauty; and even the last moments of John—an unjust and feeble prince, whom we can neither respect nor admire—are yet so portrayed as to extinguish our displeasure with him, and fill us with serious considerations on the arbitrary deeds and the inevitable fate of mortals.'—SCHLEGEL.

'If *King John*, as a whole, be not entitled to class among the very first-rate compositions of our author, it can yet exhibit some scenes of superlative beauty and effect, and two characters supported with unfailing energy and consistency.

'The bastard Faulconbridge, though not perhaps a very amiable personage, being somewhat too interested and worldly-minded in his conduct to excite much of our esteem, has, notwithstanding, so large a portion of *the very spirit of Plantagenet* in him, so much heroism, gaiety, and fire, in his constitution, and such an open and undaunted turn of mind—that we cannot refuse him our admiration; nor, on account of his fidelity to John, however ill-deserved, our occasional sympathy and attachment. The alacrity and intrepidity of his daring spirit are nobly supported to the very last, where we find him exerting every nerve to rouse and animate the conscience-stricken soul of the tyrant.

'In the person of Lady Constance, *Maternal Grief*, the most interesting passion of the play, is developed in all its strength; the picture penetrates to the inmost heart; and seared must those feelings be which can withstand so powerful an appeal; for all the emotions of the fondest affection and the wildest despair, all the rapid transitions of anguish and approximating frenzy, are wrought up into the scene with a truth of conception which rivals that of nature herself.

'The innocent and beauteous Arthur, rendered doubly attractive by the sweetness of his disposition and the severity of his fate, is thus described by his doting mother:—

'But thou art fair, and at thy birth, dear boy,
Nature and Fortune joined to make thee great;
Of Nature's gifts thou may'st with lilies boast,
And with the half-blown rose.'

When he is captured, therefore, and imprisoned by John, and consequently sealed for destruction, who but Shakspeare could have done justice to the agonising sorrows of the parent? Her invocation to Death, and her address to Pandulph, paint maternal despair with a force which no imagination can augment, and of which the tenderness and pathos have never been exceeded.

'Independent of the scenes which unfold the striking characters of Constance and Faulconbridge, there are two others in the play which may vie with anything that Shakspeare has produced; namely, the scene between John and Hubert, and that between Hubert and Arthur. The former, where the usurper obscurely intimates to Hubert his bloody wishes, is conducted in a manner so masterly, that we behold the dark and turbulent soul of John lying naked before us in all its deformity, and shrinking with fear even from the enunciation of its own vile purposes. "It is one of the scenes," as Mr. Steevens has well observed, "to which may be promised a lasting commendation. Art could add little to its perfection; and time itself can take nothing from its beauties."

'The scene with Hubert and the executioners, where the hapless Arthur supplicates for mercy, almost lacerates the heart

itself; and is only rendered supportable by the tender and alleviating impression which the sweet innocence and artless eloquence of the poor child fix with indelible influence on the mind.

'As for the character of John, which, from its meanness and imbecility, seems not well calculated for dramatic representation, Shakspeare has contrived, towards the close of the drama, to excite in his behalf some degree of interest and commiseration; especially in the dying scene, where the fallen monarch, in answer to the inquiry of his son as to the state of his feelings, mournfully exclaims, "Poisoned,—ill fare;—dead, forsook, cast off!"'—DRAKE.

'It is upon the conventional *History* of the stage that Shakspeare built his play. It is impossible now, except on very general principles, to determine why a poet, who had the authentic materials of history before him, and possessed beyond all men the power of moulding those materials, with reference to a dramatic action, into the most complete and beautiful forms, should have subjected himself, in the full vigour and maturity of his intellect, to a general adherence to the course of that conventional dramatic history. But so it is. The King John of Shakspeare is not the King John of the historians, which Shakspeare had unquestionably studied; it is not the King John of his own imagination, casting off the trammels which a rigid adoption of the facts of those historians would have imposed upon him; but it is the King John, in the conduct of the story, in the juxtaposition of the characters, and in the catastrophe—in the historical truth, and in the historical error—of the play which preceded him some few years. This, unquestionably, was not an accident. It was not what, in the vulgar sense of the word, is called a plagiarism. It was a submission of his own original powers of seizing upon the feelings and understanding of his audience, to the stronger power of *habit* in the same audience. The history of John had been familiar to them for almost half a century. The familiarity had grown out of the rudest days of the drama, and had been established in the period of its comparative refinement, which

immediately preceded Shakspeare. The old play of *King John* was, in all likelihood, a vigorous graft upon the trunk of an older play, which "occupies an intermediate place between moralities and historical plays,"—that of *Kynge Johan*, by John Bale, written probably in the reign of Edward VI. Shakspeare, then, had to choose between forty years of stage tradition, and the employment of new materials. He took, upon principle, what he found ready to his hand. But none of the transformations of classical or oriental fable, in which a new life is transfused into an old body, can equal this astonishing example of the life-conferring power of a genius such as Shakspeare's.—KNIGHT.

PASSAGES ILLUSTRATIVE
OF
SHAKSPEARE'S 'KING JOHN,'

ABRIDGED FROM HOLINSHED'S 'HISTORY OF ENGLAND.'

'Queen Elianor, the king's mother, was sore against her nephew Arthur, rather moved thereto by envy conceived against his mother, than upon any just occasion given in the behalf of the child ; for that she saw, if he were king, how his mother, Constance, would look to bear most rule within the realm of England, till her son should come to lawful age to govern of himself.

'When the doing of the queen was signified unto the said Constance, she, doubting the surety of her son, committed him to the trust of the French king; who, receiving him into his tuition, promised to defend him from all his enemies.

'About the same time, King Philip made Arthur duke of Britaine knight, and received of him his homage for Anjou, Poitiers, Maine, Touraine, and Britaine. Also, somewhat before the time that the truce should expire, the two kings talked by commissioners. Within three days after, they came together personally, and communed at full of the variance depending between them. But the French king showed himself stiff and hard in this treaty, demanding the whole country of Veulquessine to be restored unto him, as that which had been granted by Geffry, earl of Anjou, the father of King Henry the Second, unto Louis le Gros, to have his aid then against King Stephen. Moreover, he demanded that Poitiers, Anjou, Maine, and Touraine should be delivered and wholly resigned unto Arthur, duke of Britaine.

‘Upon some mistrust and suspicion gathered in the observation of the covenants on King John’s behalf, Arthur with his mother, Constance, the viscount of Tours, and divers others, fled away secretly from the king, and got them to the city of Angiers, where the mother of the said Arthur, refusing her former husband, the earl of Chester, married herself to the lord Guy de Tours, brother to the said viscount, by the Pope’s dispensation. The same year, Philip, bastard son to King Richard, killed the viscount of Limoges, in revenge of his father’s death, who was slain in besieging the castle of Chalus Cheverell.

‘About the month of December there were seen in the province of York five moons, one in the east, the second in the west, the third in the north, the fourth in the south, and the fifth as it were set in the midst of the other, having many stars about it, and went five or six times encompassing the other as it were the space of one hour, and shortly after vanished away.

‘In the year 1202, King John held his Christmas at Argenton, in Normandy, and in the Lent following he and the French king met together near unto the castle of Gulleton, and there, in talk had between them, he commanded King John, with no small arrogance, and contrary to his former promise, to restore unto his nephew, Arthur, duke of Britaine, all those lands now in his possession on that side the sea, which King John earnestly denied to do, whereupon the French king immediately after began war upon him.

‘Hugh le Brun, earl of March, joined himself with Arthur, and found means to cause them of Poictou to revolt from King John, and to take armour against him; so that the young Arthur, being encouraged with this new supply of associates, first went into Touraine and after into Anjou, compelling both those countries to submit themselves unto him, and proclaimed himself earl of those places by commission and grant obtained from King Philip. Queen Elianor, that was regent in those parts, being put in great fear with the news of this sudden stir, got her into Mirabeau, a strong town situate in the country of Anjou, and forthwith despatched a messenger with letters

unto King John, requiring him of speedy succour in this her present danger. King John was marvellously troubled with the strangeness of the news, and with many bitter words accused the French king as an untrue prince and a fraudulent league-breaker, and in all possible haste speedeth him forth, continuing his journey for the most part day and night to come to the succour of his people. To be brief, he used such diligence that he was upon his enemies' necks ere they could undertand anything of his coming. For so negligent were they, that having once won the town they ranged abroad over the country hither and thither at their liberty without any care. So that now being put in a sudden fear they were in a marvellous trouble, not knowing whether it were best for them to fight or to flee, to yield or to resist. This their fear being apparent to the Englishmen, they set upon them with great violence, and having put them all to flight, they pursued the chase towards the town of Mirabeau, into which the enemies made very great haste to enter; but such speed was used by the English soldiers that they entered and won the said town before their enemies could come near to get into it. Arthur, with the residue of the army that escaped with life, was taken; who being hereupon committed to prison, first at Falaise, and after within the city of Rouen, lived not long after. Thus by means of this success the countries of Poictou, Touraine, and Anjou were recovered.

'Shortly after, King John coming over into England, caused himself to be crowned again at Canterbury by the hands of Hubert, the Archbishop there, and then went back again into Normandy, where immediately upon his arrival a rumour was spread through all France of the death of his nephew, Arthur. It was reported that King John, through persuasion of his councillors, appointed certain persons to go unto Falaise, where Arthur was kept in prison under the charge of Hubert de Burgh, and there to put out the young gentleman's eyes.

'But through such resistance as he made against one of the tormentors that came to execute the king's command (for the other rather forsook their prince and country, than they would

consent to obey the king's authority therein) and such lamentable words as he uttered, Hubert de Burgh did preserve him from that injury, not doubting but rather to have thanks than displeasure at the king's hands, for delivering him of such infamy as would have redounded unto his highness, if the young gentleman had been so cruelly dealt withal. For he considered, that King John had resolved upon this point only in his heat and fury (which moveth men to undertake many an inconvenient enterprise, unbeseeming the person of a common man, much more reproachful to a prince), and that afterwards, upon better advisement, he would both repent himself so to have commanded, and give them small thank that should see it put in execution. Howbeit, to satisfy his mind for the time, and to stay the rage of the Britains, he caused it to be bruted abroad through the country, that the king's commandment was fulfilled, and that Arthur also, through sorrow and grief, was departed out of this life. For the space of fifteen days this rumour incessantly ran through both the realms of England and France, and there was ringing for him through towns and villages, as it had been for his funerals. It was also bruted, that his body was buried in the monastery of Saint Andrews of the Cisteaux order.

'But when the Britains were nothing pacified, but rather kindled more vehemently to work all the mischief they could devise, in revenge of their sovereign's death, there was no remedy but to signify abroad again, that Arthur was as yet living, and in health. Now when the king heard the truth of all this matter, he was nothing displeased for that his commandment was not executed, sith there were divers of his captains which uttered in plain words, that he should not find knights to keep his castles, if he dealt so cruelly with his nephew. For if it chanced any of them to be taken by the King of France, or other their adversaries, they should be sure to taste of the like cup. But now touching the manner in very deed of the end of this Arthur, writers make sundry reports. Nevertheless certain it is, that in the year next ensuing he was removed from Falaise unto the castle or tower of Rouen,

out of the which there was not any that would confess that ever he saw him go alive. Some have written, that as he essayed to have escaped out of prison, and proving to climb over the walls of the castle, he fell into the river of Seine, and so was drowned. Others write, that through very grief and languor he pined away and died of natural sickness. But some affirm, that King John secretly caused him to be murdered and made away, so as it is not thoroughly agreed upon in what sort he finished his days; but verily King John was had in great suspicion, whether worthily or not, the Lord knoweth.

'There was in this season (1213) an hermit whose name was Peter, dwelling about York, a man in great reputation with the common people, because that either inspired with some spirit of prophecy, as the people believed, or else having some notable skill in art magic, he was accustomed to tell what should follow after. This Peter, about the first of January last past, had told the king, that at the feast of the Ascension it should come to pass, that he should be cast out of his kingdom. And he offered himself to suffer death for it, if his words should not prove true. Hereupon being committed to prison within the castle of Corfe, when the day by him prefixed came, without any other notable damage unto King John, he was, by the king's commandment, drawn from the said castle unto the town of Warham, and there hanged together with his son. Some thought that he had much wrong to die, because the matter fell out even as he had prophesied; for the day before Ascension-day King John had resigned the superiority of his kingdom (as they took the matter) unto the pope, and had done to him homage, so that he was no absolute king indeed, as authors affirm. One cause, and that not the least, which moved King John the sooner to agree with the pope, rose through the words of the said hermit, that did put such a fear of some great mishap in his heart, which should grow through the disloyalty of his people, that it made him yield the sooner.

'About the same time (1216), or rather in the year last past, as some hold, it fortun'd that the Viscount of Melune, a

Frenchman, fell sick at London, and perceiving that death was at hand, he called unto him certain of the English barons, which remained in the city, upon safeguard thereof, and to them made this protestation :—I lament (saith he) your destruction and desolation at hand, because you are ignorant of the perils hanging over your heads. For this understand, that Lewis, and with him sixteen earls and barons of France, have secretly sworn (if it shall fortune him to conquer this realm of England, and be crowned king) that he will kill, banish, and confine all those of the English nobility which now do serve under him, and persecute their own king as traitors and rebels, and furthermore will dispossess all their lineage of such inheritance as they now hold in England. And because (saith he) you shall not have doubt hereof, I, which lie here at the point of death, do now affirm unto you, and take it on the peril of my soul, that I am one of those sixteen that have sworn to perform this thing. Wherefore I advise you to provide for your own safeties, and your realm's which you now destroy, and keep this thing secret which I have uttered unto you. After this speech was uttered he straightways died.

'There be which have written that after the king had lost his army, he came to the abbey of Swineshead, in Lincolnshire, and there understanding the cheapness and plenty of corn, showed himself greatly displeased therewith; as he that, for the hatred which he bare to the English people that had so traitorously revolted from him unto his adversary Lewis, wished all misery to light upon them, and thereupon said in his anger, that he would cause all kind of grain to be at a far higher price ere many days should pass. Whereupon a monk that heard him speak such words, being moved with zeal for the oppression of his country, gave the king poison in a cup of ale, whereof he first took the assay, to cause the king not to suspect the matter, and so they both died in manner at one time.'

KING JOHN.

7
B

PERSONS REPRESENTED.



	<i>Appears</i>
KING JOHN	Act I. sc. 1. Act II. sc. 1; sc. 2. Act III. sc. 1; sc. 2; sc. 3. Act IV. sc. 2. Act V. sc. 1; sc. 3; c. 7.
PRINCE HENRY, <i>son to King John; afterwards King Henry III.</i> . .	Act V. sc. 7.
ARTHUR, <i>Duke of Bretagne, son of Geoffrey, late Duke of Bretagne, the elder brother of King John.</i> .	Act II. sc. 1. Act III. sc. 1; sc. 2; sc. 3. Act IV. sc. 1; sc. 3.
WILLIAM MARESHALL, <i>Earl of Pembroke</i>	Act I. sc. 1. Act II. sc. 1. Act IV. sc. 2; sc. 3. Act V. sc. 2; sc. 4.
GEFFREY FITZ-PETER, <i>Earl of Essex, chief justiciary of England</i>	Act I. sc. 1.
WILLIAM LONGSWORD, <i>Earl of Salisbury</i>	Act I. sc. 1. Act III. sc. 1. Act IV. sc. 2; sc. 3. Act V. sc. 2; sc. 4; sc. 7.
ROBERT BIGOT, <i>Earl of Norfolk</i> .	Act IV. sc. 3. Act V. sc. 2; sc. 4; sc. 7.
HUBERT DE BURGH, <i>chamberlain to the King</i>	Act II. sc. 2. Act III. sc. 2; sc. 3. Act IV. sc. 1; sc. 2; sc. 3. Act V. sc. 3; sc. 6.
ROBERT FAULCONBRIDGE, <i>son of Sir Robert Faulconbridge.</i> . .	Act I. sc. 1.
PHILIP FAULCONBRIDGE, <i>half-brother to Robert Faulconbridge, bastard son to King Richard I.</i> .	Act I. sc. 1. Act II. sc. 1; sc. 2. Act III. sc. 1; sc. 2; sc. 3. Act IV. sc. 2; sc. 3. Act V. sc. 1; sc. 2; sc. 6; sc. 7.
JAMES GURNEY, <i>servant to Lady Faulconbridge</i>	Act I. sc. 1.
PETER OF POMFRET, <i>a prophet.</i> .	Act IV. sc. 2.
PHILIP, <i>King of France</i>	Act II. sc. 1; sc. 2. Act III. sc. 1; sc. 4.
LEWIS, <i>the Dauphin</i>	Act II. sc. 1; sc. 2. Act III. sc. 1; sc. 4. Act V. sc. 2; sc. 5.
ARCHDUKE OF AUSTRIA	Act II. sc. 1; sc. 2. Act III. sc. 1.
CARDINAL PANDULPH, <i>the Pope's legate.</i>	Act III. sc. 1; sc. 4. Act V. sc. 1; sc. 2.
MELUN, <i>a French lord</i>	Act V. sc. 2; sc. 4.
CHATILLON, <i>ambassador from France to King John</i>	Act I. sc. 1. Act II. sc. 1.
ELINOR, <i>the widow of King Henry II., and mother of King John</i> .	Act I. sc. 1. Act II. sc. 1; sc. 2. Act III. sc. 1; sc. 3.
CONSTANCE, <i>mother to Arthur</i> . .	Act II. sc. 1. Act III. sc. 1; sc. 4.
BLANCH, <i>daughter to Alphonso, King of Castile, and niece to King John</i>	Act II. sc. 1; sc. 2. Act III. sc. 1.
LADY FAULCONBRIDGE, <i>mother to the Bastard and Robert Faulconbridge</i>	Act I. sc. 1.

Ladies, Citizens of Angiers, Sheriff, Heralds, Officers, Soldiers, Messengers, and other Attendants.

SCENE—SOMETIMES IN ENGLAND; SOMETIMES IN FRANCE.

KING JOHN.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Northampton. *A Room of State in the Palace.*

Enter KING JOHN, ELINOR, *the* Queen-Mother, PEMBROKE, ESSEX, SALISBURY, *and others, with* CHATILLON.

K. John. Now say, Chatillon, what would France with us?

Chat. Thus, after greeting, speaks the king of France,
In my behaviour,¹ to the majesty—
The borrowed majesty—of England here.

Eli. A strange beginning :—borrowed majesty !

K. John. Silence, good mother ; hear the embassy.

Chat. Philip of France,² in right and true behalf
Of thy deceased brother Geffrey's son,³
Arthur Plantagenet, lays most lawful claim
To this fair island, and the territories ;

¹ *In my behaviour.*] In the tone or manner in which I speak.

² *Philip of France.*] This was Philip II. who joined Richard Cœur-de-Lion in the Third Crusade, and who, in Richard's absence, intrigued with King John to get possession of Normandy in return for support of the latter's possession of the English throne.

³ *Geffrey's son.*] Geoffrey Plantagenet, John's elder brother, was killed at a tournament in France in 1186. He left a widow, Constance, by whom he had a son, Arthur, the rightful heir to the throne, born after his father's death.

To Ireland, Poitiers, Anjou, Touraine, Maine :
Desiring thee to lay aside the sword
Which sways usurpingly these several titles,
And put the same into young Arthur's hand,
Thy nephew and right royal sovereign.

K. John. What follows, if we disallow of this ?

Chat. The proud control of fierce and bloody war,
To enforce these rights so forcibly withheld.

K. John. Here have we war for war, and blood for
blood,
Controlment for controlment : so answer France.

Chat. Then take my king's defiance from my mouth,
The farthest limit ¹ of my embassy.

K. John. Bear mine to him, and so depart in peace.
Be thou as lightning in the eyes of France ;
For, ere thou canst report I will ² be there,
The thunder of my cannon shall be heard.
So hence ! be thou the trumpet of our wrath,
And sullen presage of your own decay.—
An honourable conduct let him have :
Pembroke, look to 't.—Farewell, Chatillon.

[*Exeunt* CHATILLON and PEMBROKE.]

Eli. What now, my son ? have I not ever said,
How that ambitious Constance would not cease,
Till she had kindled France, and all the world,
Upon the right and party ³ of her son ?
This might have been prevented and made whole
With very easy arguments of love ;

¹ *The farthest limit.*] *Limit* means prescribed duty.

² *Ere thou canst report I will.*] Ere thou canst report that I will.
An allusion to the interval between seeing the flash of lightning and hearing the report.

³ *Upon the right and party.*] 'Upon the party,' that is, on the side, is a common expression in Shakspeare.

Which now the manage¹ of two kingdoms must
With fearful bloody issue arbitrate.

K. John. Our strong possession, and our right, for us.

Eli. Your strong possession much more than your right;
Or else it must go wrong with you and me :
So much my conscience whispers in your ear,
Which none but Heaven, and you, and I, shall hear.

Enter the Sheriff of Northamptonshire, who whispers ESSEX.

Essex. My liege, here is the strangest controversy,
Come from the country to be judged by you,
That e'er I heard : shall I produce the men ?

K. John. Let them approach.— [Exit Sheriff.
Our abbeys and our priories shall pay
This expedition's charge.

*Re-enter Sheriff, with ROBERT FAULCONBRIDGE, and PHILIP,
his bastard Brother.*

What men are you ?

Bast. Your faithful subject, I : a gentleman,
Born in Northamptonshire, and eldest son,
As I suppose, to Robert Faulconbridge,
A soldier, by the honour-giving hand
Of Cœur-de-lion, knighted in the field.

K. John. What art thou ?

Rob. The son and heir to that same Faulconbridge.

K. John. Is that the elder, and art thou the heir ?
You came not of one mother, then, it seems.

Bast. Most certain of one mother, mighty king,

¹ *The manage.*] The management, the contending skill. In the *Tempest*, i. 2, Prospero says of his brother, 'And to him put the manage of my state.'

That is well known ; and, as I think, one father :
 But, for the certain knowledge of that truth,
 I put you o'er ¹ to Heaven and to my mother ;
 Of that I doubt, as all men's children may.

Eli. Out on thee, rude man ! thou dost shame thy
 mother

And wound her honour with this diffidence.

Bast. I, madam ? no, I have no reason for it ;
 That is my brother's plea, and none of mine ;
 The which if he can prove, 'a ² pops me out
 At least from fair five hundred pound a-year :
 Heaven guard my mother's honour and my land !

K. John. A good blunt fellow.—Why, being younger
 born,
 Doth he lay claim to thine inheritance ?

Bast. I know not why, except to get the land.
 But once he slandered me with bastardy :
 But whe'r ³ I be as true begot or no,
 That still I lay upon my mother's head ;
 But that I am as well begot, my liege,
 (Fair fall ⁴ the bones that took the pains for me !)
 Compare our faces, and be judge yourself.
 If old Sir Robert did beget us both,
 And were our father, and this son like him,
 O, old sir Robert father, on my knee
 I give Heaven thanks I was not like to thee !

K. John. Why, what a madcap hath Heaven lent us
 here !

¹ *I put you o'er.]* I refer you.

² *'A.]* The use of *a* for *he* is often found in old dramatic dialogue.

³ *Whe'r.]* This contraction of *whether* is familiar to the readers of Shakspeare.

⁴ *Fair fall.]* May fair or good befall.

Eli. He hath a trick¹ of Cœur-de-lion's face;
The accent of his tongue affecteth him :²
Do you not read some tokens of my son
In the large composition of this man ?

K. John. Mine eye hath well examined his parts,
And finds them perfect Richard.—Sirrah, speak,
What doth move you to claim your brother's land ?

Bast. Because he hath a half-face³ like my father;
With that half-face would he have all my land :
A half-faced groat,⁴ five hundred pound a year !⁵

Rob. My gracious liege, when that⁶ my father lived,
Your brother did employ my father much;
And once despatched him in an embassy
To Germany, there with the emperor⁷
To treat of high affairs touching that time.
The advantage of his absence took the king,
And in the mean time sojourned at my father's;
Where how he did prevail I shame to speak;
But truth is truth : large lengths of seas and shores
Between my father and my mother lay,—
As I have heard my father speak himself,—
When this same lusty gentleman was got.

¹ *A trick.*] An habitual manner or characteristic; a peculiarity. Such is very frequently Shakspeare's meaning for this word.

² *Affecteth him.*] Takes after him. To affect anything usually meant to take to it, to have an aim or affection towards it.

³ *A half-face.*] A thin or meagre countenance.

⁴ *A half-faced groat.*] This is an allusion to the groats issued by Henry VII., which bore a profile of the sovereign instead of the usual full-face.

⁵ *Five hundred pound, &c.*] That is, would have, or would be worth, five hundred pound.

⁶ *When that.*] *When that* is an abridgment for *when it happened that*. So in *Julius Cæsar*, iii. 2, 'When that the poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept.'

⁷ *The emperor.*] Henry VI.

Upon his death-bed he by will bequeathed
His lands to me; and took it on his death,¹
That this, my mother's son, was none of his;
And if he were, he came into the world
Full fourteen weeks before the course of time.
Then, good my liege, let me have what is mine,
My father's land as was my father's will.

K. John. Sirrah, your brother is legitimate;
Your father's wife did after wedlock bear him:
And, if she did play false, the fault was her's;
Which fault lies on the hazards of all husbands
That marry wives. Tell me, how if my brother,
Who, as you say, took pains to get this son,
Had of your father claimed this son for his?
In sooth, good friend, your father might have kept
This calf, bred from his cow, from all the world;
In sooth he might: then, if he were my brother's,
My brother might not claim him; nor your father,
Being none of his,² refuse him. This concludes,³—
My mother's son did get your father's heir;
Your father's heir must have your father's land.

Rob. Shall, then, my father's will be of no force,
To dispossess that child which is not his?

Bast. Of no more force to dispossess me, sir,
Than was his will to get me, as I think.

Eli. Whether hadst thou rather be a Faulconbridge,
And like thy brother, to enjoy thy land,

¹ *Took it on his death.*] Took oath upon his death; swore by his death; the more usual language is *upon his life, upon his honour*. In 1 *King Henry IV.* v. 4, Falstaff says, 'I'll take it upon my death, I gave him this wound;' and in *The Lover's Progress*, by Beaumont and Fletcher, v. 3, we have 'Upon my death I take it, uncompelled, that they were guilty.'

² *Being none of his.*] Though he were none of his.

³ *This concludes.*] This ends controversy.

Or the reputed son of Cœur-de-lion,
Lord of thy presence,¹ and no land beside ?

Bast. Madam, an if² my brother had my shape,
And I had his, sir Robert his like him ;³
And if my legs were two such riding-rods,
My arms such eel-skins stuffed, my face so thin
That in mine ear I durst not stick a rose,
Lest men should say, *Look where three farthings goes* ;⁴
And, to his shape,⁵ were heir to all this land,
Would I might never stir from off this place,
I'd give it every foot to have this face ;
I would not be sir Nob⁶ in any case.

Eli. I like thee well. Wilt thou forsake thy fortune,
Bequeath thy land to him, and follow me ?
I am a soldier, and now bound to France.

Bast. Brother, take you my land, I'll take my chance :
Your face hath got five hundred pound a-year ;

¹ *Lord of thy presence.*] Possessor of thy personality as Cœur-de-Lion's son. So afterwards the king calls himself 'Lord of our presence' (p. 31).

² *An if.*] This was anciently a common pleonasm. The Saxon word *an*, meaning *if*, was sometimes corrupted into *and* when followed by *if*. 'But and if that evil servant,' &c.—Matth. xxiv. 48.

³ *Sir Robert his, &c.*] And if Sir Robert had his shape like him; if Sir Robert's shape was like my brother's.

⁴ *Look where three farthings goes.*] This is an allusion to a small thin silver coin issued by Elizabeth, when she had abolished the use of copper coins. The piece of three farthings bore a profile or half-face of the sovereign, and also the emblem of a rose. Moreover it was fashionable with courtiers in Elizabeth's time to have a rose stuck in the ear.

⁵ *To his shape.*] In addition to his shape. So in *K. Richard II.* v. 3, 'Unto my mother's prayers I bend my knees;' and in *K. Richard III.* iii. 1, 'A greater gift? O that's the sword to it.'

⁶ *Sir Nob.*] Sir Robert.

Yet sell your face for five pence, and 'tis dear.—

Madam, I'll follow you unto the death.

Eli. Nay, I would have you go before me thither.

Bast. Our country manners give our betters way.

K. John. What is thy name?

Bast. Philip, my liege; so is my name begun;
Philip, good old sir Robert's wife's eldest son.

K. John. From henceforth bear his name whose form
thou bearest;

Kneel thou down Philip, but arise more great;
Arise Sir Richard, and Plantagenet.

Bast. Brother—by the mother's side, give me your hand;
My father gave me honour, yours gave land:—
Now blessed be the hour, by night or day,
When¹ I was got sir Robert was away.

Eli. The very spirit of Plantagenet!—
I am thy grandame, Richard; call me so.

Bast. Madame, by chance, but not by truth.² What
though?

Something about, a little from the right,
In at the window, or else o'er the hatch:³
Who dares not stir by day must walk by night,
And have is have, however men do catch:
Near or far off, well won is still well shot,
And I am I, howe'er I was begot.

K. John. Go, Faulconbridge; now hast thou thy desire;
A landless knight makes thee a landed squire⁴—

¹ *When.*] That when.

² *Truth.*] Honesty.

³ *In at the window, &c.*] To say that a child came in at the window, or over the hatch, was a proverbial way of signifying that the child was illegitimate. A *hatch* is a half door.

⁴ *A landless knight, &c.*] The King here addresses Sir Robert. A squire was an attendant on a knight. By the 'landless knight' is meant the King himself, who was surnamed *Sans-terre* or *Lack-land*.

Come, madam,—and come, Richard : we must speed,
For France,¹ for France ; for it is more than need.

Bast. Brother, adieu ! good fortune come to thee,
For² thou wast got i' the way of honesty.

[*Exeunt all except the Bastard.*]

A foot of honour better than I was ;³

But many a many foot of land the worse.

*Good den,*⁴ *sir Richard.*—*God-a-mercy, fellow ;*

And if his name be George, I'll call him Peter,

For new-made honour doth forget men's names :

'Tis too respective⁵ and too sociable

For your conversion⁶. Now, your traveller,⁷—

He and his toothpick at my worship's mess ;⁸

And when my knightly stomach is sufficed,

Why then I suck my teeth, and catechise

My picked man of countries :⁹ *My dear sir,*

¹ *For France.*] On account of France, that is, the king of France.

² *Come to thee, &c.* Being come to thee because, &c.

³ *A foot of honour.*] I am now a foot higher in honour than I was.

⁴ *Good den.*] This was a common corruption of good e'en, that is, good evening.

⁵ *'Tis too respective.*] 'Tis too regardful or mindful to remember men's names.

⁶ *For your conversion.*] For such converse as becomes you.

⁷ *Your traveller.*] On this use of the pronoun *your*, see the Editor's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, p. 38, note 2.

⁸ *He and his toothpick, &c.*] He and his toothpick mess at my worship's house or table. The use of the toothpick is often ridiculed by the old writers as one amongst other affectations of foreign manners. Sir Thomas Overbury says of *The Affectate Traveller*, 'His pick-tooth is a main part of his behaviour.'

⁹ *My picked man of countries.*] A 'man of countries' means a professed traveller. The term *picked*, here occurring in word-play with *tooth-pick*, denoted *precise, formal*. So in *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 1, 'He is too picked, too spruce, too affected.'

Thus, leaning on mine elbow, I begin,
I shall beseech you—that is Question now ; ¹
 And then comes Answer like an A B C book : ²
O sir, says Answer, at your best command ;
At your employment ; at your service, sir :—
No, sir, says Question, I, sweet sir, at yours :
 And so, ere Answer knows what Question would,—
 Saving in dialogue of compliment,
 And talking of the Alps and Apennines,
 The Pyrenean, and the river Po,—
 It draws toward supper in conclusion so.
 But this is worshipful society,
 And fits the mounting spirit like myself:
 For he is but a bastard to the time,
 That doth not smack of observation ; ³
 (And so am I, whether I smack or no ;)
 And not alone in habit and device, ⁴
 Exterior form, outward accoutrement,
 But from the inward motion, ⁵ to deliver
 Sweet, sweet, sweet poison ⁶ for the age's tooth :
 Which though I will not practise to deceive,
 Yet, to avoid deceit, ⁷ I mean to learn ;
 For it shall strew the footsteps of my rising.—
 But who comes in such haste, in riding-robes ?
 What woman-post is this ? hath she no husband

¹ *That is Question now.*] That is all that Question is allowed to say.

² *An A B C book.*] This title was pronounced *an absey book*, and denoted a book to teach children their letters, catechism, &c.

³ *Of observation.*] Of having been an observing traveller.

⁴ *In habit and device.*] In dress and preciseness.

⁵ *Motion.*] Suggestion or fancy.

⁶ *Poison.*] Mendacity ; imposture.

⁷ *To avoid deceit.*] To avoid being deceived.

That will take pains to blow a horn¹ before her?
O me! it is my mother.

Enter LADY FAULCONBRIDGE *and* JAMES GURNEY.

How now, good lady?

What brings you here to court so hastily?

La. Faulc. Where is that slave, thy brother? where is he?
That holds in chase mine honour up and down?

Bast. My brother Robert? old sir Robert's son?
Colbrand the giant,² that same mighty man?
Is it sir Robert's son that you seek so?

La. Faulc. Sir Robert's son! ay, thou unreverent boy,
Sir Robert's son; why scorn'st thou at sir Robert?
He is sir Robert's son, and so art thou.

Bast. James Gurney, wilt thou give us leave a while?

Gur. Good leave,³ good Philip.

Bast. *Philip!*—sparrow!⁴—James,
There's toys⁵ abroad; anon I'll tell thee more.

[*Exit* GURN.]

Madam, I was not old sir Robert's son;
Sir Robert might have eat his part in me

¹ *To blow a horn.*] This allusion to the post horn includes a quibbling reference to the horns of a cuckold, which Lady Faulconbridge's husband was.

² *Colbrand the giant.*] A Danish giant overcome by Guy of Warwick. A description of the combat between Colbrand and Sir Guy will be found in Drayton's *Polyolbion*, the 12th song.

³ *Good leave.*] This is imitative of the usual kindly salutations—good morning, good evening, &c.

⁴ *Philip! sparrow!*] Sir Richard here ridicules his former name Philip, as being commonly given to a sparrow, in imitation of its note.

⁵ *Toys.*] Trifles. The Bastard says this ironically.

Upon Good-Friday, and ne'er broke his fast :¹
Sir Robert could do well : Marry—to confess²—
Could he get me ? Sir Robert could not do it ;
We know his handiwork.—Therefore, good mother,
To whom am I beholden for these limbs ?
Sir Robert never help to make this leg.

La. Faulc. Hast thou conspired with thy brother too,
That for thine own gain shouldst defend mine honour ?
What means this scorn, thou most untoward knave ?

Bast. Knight, knight,³ good mother,—Basilisco-like ;
What ! I am dubbed ; I have it on my shoulder.
But, mother, I am not sir Robert's son ;
I have disclaimed sir Robert, and my land ;
Legitimation, name, and all, is gone :
Then, good my mother, let me know my father ;
Some proper man, I hope ; who was it, mother ?

La. Faulc. Hast thou denied thyself a Faulconbridge ?

Bast. As faithfully as I deny the devil.

La. Faulc. King Richard Cœur-de-lion was thy father :
By long and vehement suit I was seduced
To make room for him in my husband's bed :—
Heaven lay not my transgression to my charge !—
Thou art the issue of my dear offence,
Which was so strongly urged past my defence.

Bast. Now, by this light, were I to get again,
Madam, I would not wish a better father.
Some sins do bear their privilege on earth,

¹ *Broke his fast.*] The side meaning of *violating a fast day* is here suggested.

² *To confess.*] To confess you ; to bring you to confession.

³ *Knight.*] That is, not 'knave' but 'knight.' This is suggested by the old play of *Soliman and Perseda*, in which terms of humiliation are dictated to Basilisco, who in vain requests that he should style himself *knight* instead of *knave*.

And so doth yours; your fault was not your folly;
Needs must you lay your heart at his dispose,—
Subjected tribute to commanding love,—
Against whose fury and unmatched force
The awless lion could not wage the fight,
Nor keep his princely heart from Richard's hand.¹
He that perforce robs lions of their hearts,
May easily win a woman's. Ay, my mother,
With all my heart I thank thee for my father!
Who lives and dares but say thou didst not well
When I was got, I'll send his soul to hell.
Come, lady, I will show thee to my kin;²

And they shall say, when Richard me begot,
If thou hadst said him nay, it had been sin:
Who says it was, he lies; I say, 'twas not.

[*Exeunt.*]

¹ *The awless lion, &c.*] The lion was supposed to have an instinctive awe for true royalty and chastity. So Falstaff in 1 *K. Henry IV.*, 'Your lion will not touch the true prince.' 'The awless lion,' &c., has reference to the tradition that Richard received the surname Cœur-de-Lion from his having killed a lion by thrusting his hand down its throat and clutching its heart.

² *Show thee to my kin.*] Conduct thee to my royal kindred.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—France. *Before the Walls of Angiers.*

Enter on one side, the ARCHDUKE OF AUSTRIA, and Forces; on the other, PHILIP, King of France, and Forces; LEWIS, CONSTANCE, ARTHUR, and Attendants.

Lew. Before Angiers well met, brave Austria.—
 Arthur,¹ that great forerunner of thy blood,
 Richard, that robbed the lion of his heart,
 And fought the holy wars in Palestine,
 By this brave duke came early to his grave;²
 And, for amends to his posterity,
 At our importance³ hither is he come
 To spread his colours, boy, in thy behalf,
 And to rebuke the usurpation
 Of thy unnatural uncle, English John :
 Embrace him, love him, give him welcome hither.

Arth. God shall forgive you Cœur-de-lion's death
 The rather that you give his offspring life,
 Shadowing their right under your wings of war.

¹ *Arthur.*] This is a nominative of direct address.

² *By this brave duke, &c.*] This is not true. Leopold V., archduke of Austria, discovered and seized the disguised Cœur-de-Lion in Vienna, and afterwards gave him up to the Emperor Henry VI., by whom he was imprisoned in a fortress at Worms; but Leopold died five years before Richard.

³ *Importance.*] Importunity.

I give you welcome with a powerless hand,
But with a heart full of unstained love:
Welcome before the gates of Angiers, duke.

Lew. A noble boy! who would not do thee right!

Aust. Upon thy cheek lay I this zealous kiss,
As seal to this indenture of my love—
That to my home I will no more return,
Till Angiers, and the right thou hast in France,
Together with that pale, that white-faced shore,¹
Whose foot spurns back the ocean's roaring tides,
And coops from other lands her islanders,
Even till that England, hedged in with the main,
That water-walled bulwark, still secure²
And confident from foreign purposes,
Even till that utmost corner of the west
Salute thee for her king: till then, fair boy,
Will I not think of home, but follow arms.

Const. O, take his mother's thanks, a widow's thanks,
Till your strong hand shall help to give him strength
To make a more requital³ to your love.

Aust. The peace of heaven is theirs that lift their swords
In such a just and charitable war.

K. Phi. Well, then, to work; our cannon shall be bent⁴
Against the brows of this resisting town.—
Call for our chiefest men of discipline,

¹ *That white-faced shore.*] England received the name of Albion from the white appearance of the cliffs on its southern coast.

² *Still secure.*] Ever fearless. *Secure* used frequently to signify *without care or anxiety*. 'Man may securely sin, but safely never.'—Ben Jonson's *Forest*, xi.

³ *A more requital.*] This use of *more* in the sense of *greater*, was formerly usual. 'The more part advised.'—Acts xxvii. 12. Instead of *the greater and less*, it was customary to say *the more and less*.

⁴ *Bent.*] Directed.

To cull the plots¹ of best advantages :—
 We'll lay before this town our royal bones,
 Wade to the market-place in Frenchmen's blood,
 But we will make it subject to this boy.

Const. Stay for an answer to your embassy,
 Lest unadvised² you stain your swords with blood :
 My lord Chatillon may from England bring
 That right in peace, which here we urge in war ;
 And then we shall repent each drop of blood
 That hot-rash haste so indirectly³ shed.

Enter CHATILLON.

K. Phi. A wonder, lady !—lo, upon thy wish,
 Our messenger Chatillon is arrived.—
 What England says, say briefly, gentle lord,
 We coldly pause for thee ; Chatillon, speak.

Chat. Then turn your forces from this paltry siege,
 And stir them up against a mightier task.
 England, impatient of your just demands,
 Hath put himself in arms ; the adverse winds,
 Whose leisure I have stayed, have given him time
 To land his legions all as soon as I :
 His marches are expedient⁴ to this town,
 His forces strong, his soldiers confident.
 With him along is come the mother-queen,
 An Até,⁵ stirring him to blood and strife :

¹ *To cull the plots.*] To judge and make choice of positions.

² *Unadvised.*] Inconsiderately.

³ *Indirectly.*] Unfairly ; out of due course. Compare *K. Henry V.* ii. 4, 'Your crown and kingdom indirectly held from him !' So in *Julius Cæsar*, iv. 3, 'Any indirection' means any way that is not fair and straightforward.

⁴ *Expedient.*] With expedition ; in haste.

⁵ *Até.*] The goddess of discord.

With her her niece, the lady Blanch of Spain ;
With them a bastard of the king's deceased :¹
And all the unsettled humours² of the land,—
Rash, inconsiderate, fiery voluntaries,
With ladies' faces, and fierce dragons' spleens,—
Have sold their fortunes at their native homes,
Bearing their birthrights proudly on their backs,
To make a hazard of new fortunes here.
In brief, a braver³ choice of dauntless spirits
Than now the English bottoms have waft o'er,
Did never float upon the swelling tide,
To do offence and scath in Christendom.

[*Drums beat.*

The interruption of their churlish drums
Cuts off more circumstance :⁴ they are at hand
To parley, or to fight : therefore prepare.

K. Phi. How much unlooked-for is this expedition !

Aust. By how much unexpected, by so much
We must awake endeavour for defence,
For courage mounteth with occasion :
Let them be welcome then, we are prepared.

*Enter KING JOHN, ELINOR, BLANCH, the Bastard, PEMBROKE,
and Forces.*

K. John. Peace be to France ! if France in peace permit
Our just and lineal entrance to our own.
If not, bleed France, and peace ascend to heaven !
Whiles we, God's wrathful agent, do correct
Their proud contempt that beats his peace to heaven.

¹ *The king's deceased.*] The deceased king's.

² *Humours.*] Spirits ; tempers.

³ *Braver.*] Grandeur.

⁴ *Circumstance.*] Detailed narration.

K. Phi. Peace be to England ! if that war return
From France to England, there to live in peace.
England we love ; and for that England's sake
With burden of our armour here we sweat :
This toil of ours should be a work of thine,
But thou from loving England art so far,
That thou hast under-wrought his lawful king,
Cut off the sequence¹ of posterity,
Out-faced infant state,² and done a rape
Upon the maiden virtue of the crown.
Look here upon thy brother Geffrey's face ;—
These eyes, these brows, were moulded out of his :
This little abstract doth contain that large
Which died in Geffrey ; and the hand of time
Shall draw³ this brief into as huge a volume.
That Geffrey was thy elder brother born,
And this his son ; England was Geffrey's right,
And this is Geffrey's. In the name of God,
How comes it then that thou art called a king,
When living blood doth in these temples beat,
Which owe the crown⁴ that thou o'ermasterest ?

K. John. From whom hast thou this great commission,
France,
To draw my answer from thy articles ?

K. Phi. From that supernal Judge that stirs good
thoughts
In any breast of strong authority,
To look into the blots and stains of right.
That Judge hath made me guardian to this boy :

¹ *The sequence.*] The succession.

² *Outfaced infant state.*] Overborne infant royalty.

³ *Draw.*] Extend.

⁴ *Which owe the crown.*] To which temples belongs the crown.
Owe means *own*.

Under whose warrant I impeach thy wrong,
And by whose help I mean to chastise it.

K. John. Alack, thou dost usurp authority.

K. Phi. Excuse—it is to beat usurping down.

Eli. Who is it thou dost call usurper, France?

Const. Let me make answer;—thy usurping son.

Eli. Out, insolent! thy bastard shall be king,
That thou mayst be a queen and check the world!¹

Const. My bed was ever to thy son as true,
As thine was to thy husband; and this boy
Liker in feature to his father Geffrey,
Than thou and John, in manners being as like
As rain to water, or devil to his dam.
My boy a bastard! By my soul, I think,
His father never was so true begot;
It cannot be an' if thou wert his mother.

Eli. There's a good mother, boy, that blots thy father.

Const. There's a good grandame, boy, that would blot
thee.

Aust. Peace!

Bast. Hear the crier.

Aust. What the devil art thou?

Bast. One that will play the devil, sir, with you,
An 'a may catch your hide and you alone.²
You are the hare of whom the proverb³ goes,
Whose valour plucks dead lions by the beard.
I'll smoke your skin-coat, an I catch you right:
Sirrah, look to't; i' faith, I will, i' faith.

¹ *And check the world.*] An allusion, as Staunton thinks, to the *Queen* of the chess-board.

² *An 'a may catch, &c.*] The bastard hates Austria for having caused Cœur-de-Lion's death, and afterwards wearing the lion's hide which had been that monarch's trophy.

³ *The proverb.*] 'A hare may tread on a dead lion.'

Blanch. O, well did he become that lion's robe,
That did disrobe the lion of that robe !

Bast. It lies as sightly on the back of him,
As great Alcides' shows upon an ass :¹
But, ass, I'll take that burden from your back ;
Or lay on that shall make your shoulders crack.

Aust. What cracker² is this same, that deafs our ears
With this abundance of superfluous breath ?
King Philip, determine what we shall do straight.

K. Phi. Women and fools, break off your conference.
King John, this is the very sum of all,—
England and Ireland, Anjou, Touraine, Maine,
In right of Arthur do I claim of thee :
Wilt thou resign them, and lay down thy arms ?

K. John. My life as soon !—I do defy thee, France.
Arthur of Bretagne, yield thee to my hand,
And, out of my dear love, I'll give thee more
Than e'er the coward hand of France can win :
Submit thee, boy.

Eli. Come to thy grandame, child.

Const. Do, child, go to it grandame,³ child ;
Give grandame kingdom, and it grandame will
Give it a plum, a cherry, and a fig :
There's a good grandame.

¹ *As great Alcides, &c.*] An allusion to the fable of the Ass in the Lion's skin. Hercules wore the skin of the Nemean Lion which he slew. For *shows* the old text has *shoes*.

² *Cracker.*] A crack, or cracker, was a forward youth.

³ *Go to it grandame.*] This is an ironical imitation of the designedly ungrammatical forms often used in coaxing children. Craik in his *English of Shakspeare*, says, that *it* was a form of the possessive, as in the compound *itself*, which he thinks to be analogous to *myself* and *thyself*; but *itself* is analogous to those other pronouns of its own person, *himself*, *herself*, *themselves*, and is objective.

Arth. Good my mother, peace !

I would that I were low laid in my grave ;
I am not worth this coil that's made for me.

Eli. His mother shames him so, poor boy, he weeps.

Const. Now shame upon you, whe'r she does or no !
His grandame's wrongs, and not his mother's shames,
Draw those heaven-moving pearls from his poor eyes,
Which Heaven shall take in nature of a fee ;
Ay, with these crystal beads¹ Heaven shall be bribed
To do him justice, and revenge on you.

Eli. Thou monstrous slanderer of heaven and earth !

Const. Thou monstrous injurer of heaven and earth !
Call not me slanderer ! thou and thine usurp
The dominations, royalties, and rights
Of this oppressed boy. This is thy eldest son's son,
Infortunate in nothing but in thee ;
Thy sins are visited in this poor child ;
The canon of the law² is laid on him,
Being but the second generation
Removed from thy sin-conceiving womb.

K. John. Bedlam, have done.

Const. I have but this to say,—
That he's not only plagued for her sin,
But God hath made her sin and her³ the plague
On this removed issue ;—plagued for her,
And with her plagued ;⁴ her sin his injury,

¹ *Crystal beads.*] There is here an implied reference to *prayers* as one of the meanings of the word *beads*.

² *The canon of the law.*] The denunciation in the second commandment of the decalogue.

³ *Her sin and her.*] Both her sin and herself.

⁴ *Plagued for her, &c.*] The remainder of Constance's speech is grossly misprinted in the old text. The meaning is—Plagued on her account, and plagued by means of her ; her sin being the wrong he suffers, and her wrong-doing being the chastiser of her sin.

Her injury the beadle to her sin ;
All punished in the person of this child,
And all for her. A plague upon her !

Eli. Thou unadvised¹ scold, I can produce
A will that bars the title of thy son.

Const. Ay, who doubts that ? a will ! a wicked will,
A woman's will, a cankered grandame's will !

K. Phi. Peace, lady ; pause, or be more temperate :
It ill becomes this presence to cry *aim*²
To these ill-tuned repetitions.

Some trumpet summon hither to the walls
These men of Angiers ; let us hear them speak
Whose title they admit, Arthur's or John's.

Trumpet sounds. Enter Citizens upon the Walls.

Cit. Who is it that hath warned us to the walls ?

K. Phi. 'Tis France, for England.

K. John. England, for itself :

You men of Angiers, and my loving subjects—

K. Phi. You loving men of Angiers, Arthur's subjects,
Our trumpet called you to this gentle parle—

K. John. For our advantage,—therefore hear us first.
These flags of France, that are advanced here
Before the eye and prospect of your town,
Have hither marched to your endamagement.
The cannons have their bowels full of wrath,
And ready mounted are they to spit forth
Their iron indignation 'gainst your walls :
All preparation for a bloody siege,

¹ *Unadvised.*] Heedless ; regardless.

² *To cry aim.*] To urge on with encouragement. *Aim!* was an exclamation of encouragement, addressed to an archer.

And merciless proceeding, by these French,
Confronts your city's eyes, your winking gates;
And but for our approach, those sleeping stones,
That as a waist do girdle you about,
By the compulsion of their ordinance
By this time from their fixed beds of lime¹
Had been dishabited, and wide havoc made
For bloody power to rush upon your peace.
But, on the sight of us, your lawful king,—
Who painfully with much expedient² march
Have brought a countercheck before your gates,
To save unscratched your city's threatened cheeks,—
Behold, the French, amazed,³ vouchsafe a parole;
And now, instead of bullets wrapped in fire,
To make a shaking fever in your walls,
They shoot but calm words folded up in smoke,
To make a faithless error in your ears:
Which trust accordingly, kind citizens,
And let us in,—your king, whose laboured spirits,
Forwearied in this action of swift speed,
Craves harbourage within your city walls.

K. Phi. When I have said, make answer to us both.
Lo, in this right hand, whose protection
Is most divinely vowed upon⁴ the right
Of him it holds, stands young Plantagenet,
Son to the elder brother of this man,
And king o'er him and all that he enjoys:
For this down-trodden equity we tread
In warlike march these greens before your town;

¹ *Beds of lime.*] Observe the continuation of metaphor in the expressions '*winking gates*,' '*sleeping stones*,' '*beds of lime*.'

² *Much expedient.*] Very expeditious or rapid.

³ *Amazed.*] Confounded.

⁴ *Divinely vowed upon.*] Religiously sworn in behalf of.

Being no further enemy to you
Than the constraint of hospitable zeal,
In the relief of this oppressed child,
Religiously provokes. Be pleased then
To pay that duty which you truly owe
To him that owes it,¹—namely, this young prince :
And then our arms, like to a muzzled bear,
Save in aspect have all offence sealed up ;²
Our cannon's malice vainly shall be spent
Against the invulnerable clouds of heaven ;
And, with a blessed and unvexed retire,
With unhacked swords, and helmets all unbruised,
We will bear home that lusty blood again
Which here we came to spout against your town,
And leave your children, wives, and you, in peace.
But if you fondly pass³ our proffered offer,
'Tis not the roundure⁴ of your old-faced walls
Can hide you from our messengers of war,
Though all these English and their discipline
Were harboured in their rude circumference.
Then tell us, shall your city call us lord,
In that behalf which we have challenged it ?⁵
Or shall we give the signal to our rage,
And stalk in blood to our possession ?

Cit. In brief, we are the king of England's subjects ;
For him, and in his right, we hold this town.

K. John. Acknowledge then the king, and let me in.

¹ *That owes it.*] That owns it ; to whom it belongs.

² *Save in aspect, &c.*] Have all their offensiveness, except their appearance only, restrained.

³ *Fondly pass.*] Foolishly disregard.

⁴ *Roundure.*] Circle. Fr. *rondour*.

⁵ *In that behalf, &c.*] In behalf of him for whom we have claimed it.

Cit. That can we not : but he that proves the king,
To him will we prove loyal : till that time
Have we rammed up our gates against the world.

K. John. Doth not the crown of England prove the king ?
And if not that, I bring you witnesses,
Twice fifteen thousand hearts of England's breed,—

Bast. Bastards and else. [*Aside.*

K. John. To verify our title with their lives.

K. Phi. As many, and as well-born bloods as those,—

Bast. Some bastards too. [*Aside.*

K. Phi. Stand in his face, to contradict his claim.

Cit. Till you compound whose right is worthiest,
We, for the worthiest, hold the right from both.

K. John. Then God forgive the sin of all those souls,
That to their everlasting residence,
Before the dew of evening fall, shall fleet,
In dreadful trial of our kingdom's King !¹

K. Phi. Amen, Amen !—Mount, chevaliers ! to arms !

Bast. St. George² that swindged the dragon, and e'er since
Sits on his horseback at mine hostess' door,
Teach us some fence !—Sirrah, were I at home,
At your den, sirrah [*to AUSTRIA*], with your lioness,
I'd set an ox-head to your lion's hide,
And make a monster³ of you.

Aust. Peace ; no more.

Bast. O, tremble, for you hear the lion roar !

K. John. Up higher to the plain ; where we'll set forth
In best appointment all our regiments.

¹ *Our kingdom's King.*] Our royalty's King ; the King of kings ; the Almighty.

² *St. George.*] The patron saint of England, whose badge was worn as a pledge of victory or safety. 'St. George to borrow,' that is, *St. George as our pledge*, was the customary expression of reliance on his guardianship.

³ *A monster.*] A cuckold.

Bast. Speed then, to take advantage of the field.

K. Phi. It shall be so ;—[*to LEWIS*] and at the other hill
Command the rest to stand.—God, and our right !¹

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The same.*

Alarums and Excursions ; then a Retreat. Enter a French Herald, with Trumpets, to the gates.

Fr. Her. You men of Angiers, open wide your gates,
And let young Arthur, duke of Bretagne, in ;
Who, by the hand of France, this day hath made
Much work for tears in many an English mother,
Whose sons lie scattered on the bleeding ground ;
Many a widow's husband grovelling lies,
Coldly embracing the discoloured earth ;
And victory, with little loss, doth play
Upon the dancing banners of the French,
Who are at hand, triumphantly displayed,²
To enter conquerors, and to proclaim
Arthur of Bretagne England's king, and yours !

Enter an English Herald, with Trumpets

Eng. Her. Rejoice, you men of Angiers, ring your bells ;
King John, your king and England's, doth approach,
Commander of this hot malicious day !
Their armours, that marched hence so silver-bright,
Hither return all gilt with Frenchmen's blood ;
There stuck no plume in any English crest

¹ *God and our right.*] *Fr. Dieu et mon Droit.* This was properly the motto of English royalty, having been first adopted by Richard I.

² *Displayed.*] Unfolded ; spread out. This refers to the banners.

That is removed¹ by a staff of France ;
 Our colours do return in those same hands
 That did display them when we first marched forth ;
 And, like a jolly troop of huntsmen, come
 Our lusty English, all with purpled hands,²
 Dyed in the dying slaughter of their foes :
 Open your gates, and give the victors way.

*Hubert.*³ Heralds, from off⁴ our towers we might behold,
 From first to last, the onset and retire
 Of both your armies ; whose equality
 By our best eyes cannot be censured.⁵
 Blood hath bought blood, and blows have answered blows ;
 Strength matched with strength, and power confronted
 power :
 Both are alike, and both alike we like.
 One must prove greatest : while they weigh so even,
 We hold our town for neither ; yet for both.

¹ *That is removed, &c.*] That is dislodged or struck out by a French lance. Combatants in tilting matches used to aim at this dislodgment of the crest feathers of an adversary. So in Webster's *White Devil*. 'The great barriers moulted not more feathers.'

² *All with purpled hands.*] It was part of the triumph of the chase, for the huntsmen to dip their hands in the blood of the deer. Compare *Julius Cæsar*, iii. 1.

' Here thy hunters stand
 Signed in thy spoil, and crimsoned in thy lethe.'

³ *Hubert.*] We believe that Shakspeare, in the present scene, meant to represent Hubert de Burgh as a citizen of Angiers. Some commentators have conjectured that his name is here given to the spokesman, because it may have been customary for the actor who personated Hubert to perform also the part of the Angiers citizen.

⁴ *From off.*] The expressions *from off*, *from forth*, *from out*, are still customary poetical inversions of *off from*, *forth from*, &c.

⁵ *Censured.*] Judged.

Re-enter, at one side, KING JOHN, with his Power, BLINOR, BLANCH, and the Bastard; at the other, KING PHILIP, LEWIS, AUSTRIA, and Forces.

K. John. France, hast thou yet more blood to cast away ?
Say, shall the current of our right run on,
Whose passage, vexed with thy impediment,
Shall leave his¹ native channel, and o'erswell
With course disturbed even thy confining shores,
Unless thou let his silver water keep
A peaceful progress to the ocean ?

K. Phi. England, thou hast not saved one drop of blood
In this hot trial, more than we of France ;
Rather lost more. And by this hand I swear,
That sways the earth this climate overlooks,
Before we will lay down our just-borne arms,
We'll put thee down 'gainst whom these arms we bear,
Or add a royal number² to the dead,
Gracing the scroll that tells of this war's loss,
With slaughter coupled to the name of kings.

Bast. Ha, majesty ! how high thy glory towers,
When the rich blood of kings is set on fire !
O, now doth death line his dead chaps with steel,
The swords of soldiers are his teeth, his fangs ;
And now he feasts, mousing³ the flesh of men,
In undetermined differences⁴ of kings.

¹ *His.*] Its : the old neuter, as well as masculine, possessive of the third person.

² *Add a royal number.*] Add my royal self in number.

³ *Mousing.*] To *mouse* means here to prey upon or devour as a cat does a mouse.

⁴ *In undetermined differences.*] Amidst the undetermined disputes.

Why stand these royal fronts amazed thus?
 Cry havoc,¹ kings! back to the stained field,
 You equal-potents, fiery-kindled spirits!
 Then let confusion² of one part confirm
 The other's peace; till then, blows, blood, and death!

K. John. Whose party do the townsmen yet admit?

K. Phi. Speak, citizens, for England: who's your king?

Hubert. The king of England, when we know the king.

K. Phi. Know him in us, that here hold up his right.

K. John. In us, that are our own great deputy,³

And bear possession of our person here:
 Lord of our presence,⁴ Angiers, and of you.

Hubert. A greater power than we⁵ denies all this;
 And, till it be undoubted, we do lock
 Our former scruple in our strong-barred gates,—
 Kings of our fears, until our fears, resolved,
 Be by some certain king purged and deposed.⁶

Bast. By heaven, these scroyles⁷ of Angiers flout you,
 kings,
 And stand securely on their battlements,
 As in a theatre, whence they gape and point
 At your industrious scenes and acts of death.

¹ *Cry havoc.*] To 'cry havoc' was to proclaim that no quarter should be given.

² *Confusion.*] The rout or defeat.

³ *Our own great deputy.*] Deputy for ourself, not for another, as Philip is for Arthur.

⁴ *Lord of our presence.*] Compare what the Queen-mother says to the Bastard, as referred to in p. 9, note 1.

⁵ *A greater power than we.*] Viz. Providence or destiny.

⁶ *Kings of our fears, &c.*] Which strong barred gates signify that our uncertain fears are our kings, or must control us, until they be purged and deposed by some certain king.

⁷ *Scroyles.*] Scrofulous or scurvy fellows. Fr. *escrouelles*, the king's evil; hence, in Scotland, vulgarly called the cruels.

Your royal presences be ruled by me :
 Do like the mutines of Jerusalem,¹
 Be friends a while, and both conjointly bend
 Your sharpest deeds of malice on this town :
 By east and west let France and England mount
 Their battering cannon charged to the mouths,
 Till their soul-fearing² clamours have brawled down
 The flinty ribs of this contemptuous city :—
 I'd play incessantly upon these jades,
 Even till unfenced desolation
 Leave them as naked as the vulgar air.—
 That done, dissever your united strengths,
 And part your mingled colours once again,
 Turn face to face, and bloody point to point :
 Then in a moment fortune shall cull forth
 Out of one side her happy minion,³
 To whom in favour she shall give the day,
 And kiss him with a glorious victory.
 How like you this wild counsel, mighty states ?
 Smacks it not something of the policy ?⁴

K. John. Now, by the sky that hangs above our heads,
 I like it well ;—France, shall we knit our powers,
 And lay this Angiers even with the ground ;
 Then after fight⁵ who shall be king of it ?

Bast. An if thou hast the mettle of a king,

¹ *Like the mutines of Jerusalem.*] An allusion to the union of the civil factions in Jerusalem, when it was besieged by Titus. *Mutines* is *mutineers*. So in *Hamlet*, v. 2, 'Methought I lay worse than the mutines in the bilboes.'

² *Soul-fearing.*] Soul-frightening. *Fearing* in this sense of frightening occurs several time in Shakspeare, and is still similarly used in the north.

³ *Happy minion.*] Lucky favourite.

⁴ *The policy.*] The right policy.

⁵ *After fight.*] Afterwards contest.

Being wronged, as we are, by this peevish town,
 Turn thou the mouth of thy artillery,
 As we will ours, against these saucy walls :
 And when that we have dashed them to the ground,
 Why, then defy each other ; and, pell-mell,
 Make work upon ourselves, for heaven or hell.

K. Phi. Let it be so.—Say where will you assault ?

K. John. We from the west will send destruction
 Into this city's bosom.

Aust. I from the north.

K. Phi. Our thunder¹ from the south,
 Shall rain their drift of bullets on this town.

Bast. O prudent discipline ! From north to south,
 Austria and France shoot in each other's mouth : [*Aside.*
 I'll stir them to it :—Come, away, away !

Hubert. Hear us, great kings : vouchsafe a while to
 stay,
 And I shall show you peace and fair-faced league,
 Win you² this city without stroke or wound,
 Rescue those breathing lives to die in beds
 That here come sacrifices for the field :
 Persèver³ not, but hear me, mighty kings.

K. John. Speak on, with favour ; we are bent to hear

Hubert. That daughter there of Spain, the lady Blanch,⁴
 Is near to England : look upon the years
 Of Lewis the Dauphin, and that lovely maid :
 If lusty love should go in quest of beauty,

¹ *Thunder.*] Cannon.

² *Win you.*] I shall win for you.

³ *Persèver.*] So the word was formerly spelt and pronounced.

⁴ *The Lady Blanch.*] This accomplished and excellent princess was daughter of Alphonso VIII., king of Castile, and Eleanor, sister of King John. She was married to the Dauphin, who became Louis VIII., and after his death she held the regency of France during the minority of her son Louis IX. She died in 1254.

Where should he find it fairer than in Blanch ?
If zealous¹ love should go in search of virtue,
Where should he find it purer than in Blanch ?
If love ambitious sought a match of birth,
Whose veins bound² richer blood than lady Blanch ?
Such as she is, in beauty, virtue, birth,
Is the young Dauphin every way complete ;
If not complete, O say, he is not she :³
And she again wants nothing, to name want,
If want it be not that she is not he :
He is the half part of a blessed man,
Left to be finished by such a she ;
And she a fair divided excellence,
Whose fulness of perfection lies in him.⁴
O, two such silver currents, when they join,
Do glorify the banks that bound them in ;
And two such shores to two such streams made one,
Two such controlling bounds, shall you be, kings,
To these two princes, if you marry them.
This union shall do more than battery can,
To our fast-closed gates ; for, at this match,
With swifter spleen than powder can enforce,
The mouth of passage shall we fling wide ope,
And give you entrance ; but, without this match,
The sea enraged is not half so deaf,
Lions more confident, mountains and rocks
More free from motion, no, not death himself
In mortal fury half so peremptory,
As we to keep this city.

¹ *Zealous.*] Religiously actuated.

² *Bound.*] Contain.

³ *He is not she.*] He is not one with her by marriage.

⁴ *Whose fulness, &c.*] In Shakspeare's time the female constitution was supposed to be imperfect without marriage. See the Editor's *Twelfth Night*, p. 5, note 1.

*Bast.*Here's a stay,¹

That shakes the rotten carcase of old death
Out of his rags ! Here's a large mouth, indeed,
That spits forth death, and mountains, rocks, and seas,
Talks as familiarly of roaring lions
As maids of thirteen do of puppy-dogs !
What cannoneer begot this lusty blood ?
He speaks plain cannon-fire, and smoke, and bounce ;
He gives the bastinado with his tongue ;
Our ears are cudgelled ; not a word of his
But buffets better than a fist of France :
Zounds ! I was never so bethumped with words,
Since I first called my brother's father dad.

Eli. Son, list to this conjunction, make this match ;
Give with our niece a dowry large enough :
For by this knot thou shalt so surely tie
Thy now unsured assurance to the crown,
That yon green² boy shall have no sun to ripe
The bloom that promiseth a mighty fruit.³
I see a yielding in the looks of France ;
Mark, how they whisper : urge them, while their souls
Are capable⁴ of this ambition ;
Lest zeal, now melted by the windy breath
Of soft petitions, pity, and remorse,
Cool and congeal again to what it was.

¹ *A stay.*] An arresting voice.

² *Yon green boy.*] Arthur.

³ *No sun, &c.*] Alluding to the withdrawment of the fostering care of Philip, who afterwards in the present scene, referring to Constance, says—

‘ In her right we came,
Which we, God knows, have turned another way,
To our own vantage.’

⁴ *Capable.*] Sensible ; susceptible. So in iii. 1, ‘ For I am sick and capable of fears.’

Hubert. Why answer not the double majesties
This friendly treaty of our threatened town?

K. Phi. Speak England first, that hath been forward
first

To speak unto this city. What say you?

K. John. If that the Dauphin there, thy princely son,
Can in this book of beauty read—*I love*,
Her dowry shall weigh equal with a queen :
For Anjou, and fair Touraine, Maine, Poictiers,
And all that we upon this side the sea
(Except this city now by us besieged)
Find liable to our crown and dignity,
Shall gild her bridal bed ; and make her rich
In titles, honours, and promotions,
As she in beauty, education, blood,
Holds hand¹ with any princess of the world.

K. Phi. What say'st thou, boy ? look in the lady's face.

Lew. I do, my lord, and in her eye I find
A wonder, or a wondrous miracle,
The shadow of myself formed in her eye ;
Which being but the shadow² of your son,
Becomes a sun, and makes your son a shadow :
I do protest, I never loved myself,
Till now infixed I beheld myself,
Drawn in the flattering table³ of her eye.

[*Whispers with BLANCH.*

Bast. Drawn in the flattering table of her eye !—
Hanged in the frowning wrinkle of her brow !—

¹ *Holds hand.*] Is even.

² *Being but the shadow.*] Though it be but the reflection.

³ *Table.*] A table is a surface on which a picture is drawn, a memorandum written, &c.

'Yea, from the table of my memory

I'll wipe away all trivial fond records.'—*Hamlet*, i. 5.

And quartered in her heart!—he doth espy
Himself love's traitor: this is pity now,
That, hanged,¹ and drawn, and quartered, there should be
In such a love so vile a lout as he. [*Aside.*

Blanch. My uncle's will in this respect is mine.
If he see aught in you that makes him like,
That anything he sees,² which moves his liking,
I can with ease translate it to my will;
Or, if you will, to speak more properly,
I will enforce it easily to my love.
Further I will not flatter you, my lord,
That all I see in you is worthy love,
Than this—that nothing do I see in you,
Though churlish thoughts themselves should be your
judge,
That I can find should merit any hate.

K. John. What say these young ones? What say you,
my niece?

Blanch. That she is bound in honour still³ to do
What you in wisdom still vouchsafe to say.

K. John. Speak then, prince Dauphin; can you love
this lady?

Lew. Nay, ask me if I can refrain from love;
For I do love her most unfeignedly.

K. John. Then do I give Volquessen,⁴ Touraine, Maine,
Poitiers, and Anjou, these five provinces,
With her to thee; and this addition more,
Full thirty-thousand marks of English coin.

¹ *That hanged, &c.*] That in such a love there should be so vile
a lout as he, hanged, &c.

² *That anything he sees.*] That same anything seen by him.

³ *Still.*] Ever.

⁴ *Volquessen.*] Now called *Le Vexin*. Shakspeare found this
ancient name in the old play. In Holinshed it is 'Veuxin or Veul-
quessine.'

Philip of France, if thou be pleased withal,
Command thy son and daughter to join hands.

K. Phi. It likes us well.¹ Young princes, close your hands.

Aust. And your lips too ; for I am well assured
That I did so when I was first assured.²

K. Phi. Now, citizens of Angiers, ope your gates ;
Let in that amity which you have made,
For at saint Mary's chapel presently
The rites of marriage shall be solemnized.
Is not the lady Constance in this troop ?
I know she is not ; for this match, made up,
Her presence would have interrupted much :
Where is she and her son ? tell me, who knows.

Lew. She is sad and passionate³ at your highness' tent.

K. Phi. And, by my faith, this league that we have
made
Will give her sadness very little cure.
Brother of England, how may we content
This widow lady ? In her right we came ;
Which we, God knows, have turned another way,
To our own vantage.

¹ *It likes us well.*] To *like* was often used in the sense of to please.

² *Assured.*] Affianced ; betrothed. In old times a kiss was always a part of the ceremony of affiancing. So in *Twelfth Night*, v. 1 :—

‘A contract of eternal bond of love,
Attested by the holy close of lips.’

So also in *King Henry V.* v. 2, Henry says :—

‘Now welcome, Kate : and bear me witness all,
That here I kiss her as my sovereign queen.’

³ *Passionate.*] Full of emotion.

K. John. We will heal up all,
 For we'll create young Arthur duke of Bretagne,
 And earl of Richmond ; and this rich fair town
 We make him lord of.—Call the lady Constance ;
 Some speedy messenger bid her repair
 To our solemnity :—I trust we shall,
 If not fill up the measure of her will,
 Yet in some measure satisfy her so
 That we shall stop her exclamation.¹
 Go we, as well ² as haste will suffer us,
 To this unlooked-for, unprepared pomp.³

[*Exeunt all but the Bastard.—The
 Citizens retire from the walls.*]

Bast. Mad world ! mad kings ! mad composition !⁴
 John, to stop Arthur's title in the whole,⁵
 Hath willingly departed⁶ with a part :
 And France, whose armour conscience buckled on,
 Whom zeal⁷ and charity brought to the field

¹ *Exclamation.*] Crying out against us ; upbraiding ; reproaching. So in *King Richard III.* iv. 4, 'Be copious in exclams ;' and again :

'Or with the clamorous report of war,
 Thus will I drown your exclamations.'

Portia, in the *Merchant of Venice*, iii. 2, speaking of the ring given to Bassanio, says :—'Which, when you part from, lose, or give away,' let it 'be my vantage to exclaim on you.'

² *As well, &c.*] In as fit a condition.

³ *Pomp.*] Nuptial procession. So in iii. 1, Blanch says :—

'Shall braying trumpets and loud churlish drums,
 Clamours of hell, be measures to our pomp.'

⁴ *Composition.*] League ; settlement of differences.

⁵ *Title in the whole.*] General title to the royalty of England.

⁶ *Departed.*] As *part* often signified to *depart*, so *depart with* sometimes signified *part with*.

⁷ *Zeal.*] Religion.

As God's own soldier, rounded¹ in the ear
 With that same purpose-changer, that sly devil,
 That broker,² that still breaks the pate of faith;
 That daily break-vow; he that wins of all,
 Of kings, of beggars, old men, young men, maids—
 Who having no external thing to lose
 But the word maid, cheats the poor maid of that;
 That smooth-faced gentleman, tickling commodity,³
 Commodity, the bias of the world;
 The world, who of itself is peised⁴ well,
 Made to run even, upon even ground;
 Till this advantage, this vile drawing bias,⁵
 This sway of motion, this commodity,
 Makes it take head from all indifferency,⁶
 From all direction, purpose, course, intent:
 And this same bias, this commodity,
 This bawd, this broker, this all-changing word,
 Clapped on the outward eye⁷ of fickle France,
 Hath drawn him from his own determined aid,⁸

¹ *Rounded.*] Being whispered, or talked to privately.

² *Broker.*] Pander; artful deceiver. So in *Hamlet*, i. 3.

'Do not believe his vows, for they are brokers,
 Not of the dye which their investments show.'

So Sir Thomas Overbury says of *The Dissembler*, 'He dyeth his means and his meaning into two colours. He allures, is not allured, by his affections, for they are the brokers of his observation.'

³ *Commodity.*] Advantage; self-accommodating spirit.

⁴ *Peised.*] Poised; balanced.

⁵ *Vile drawing bias.*] A bias was a technical term of the bowling alley, denoting a weight on the side of a bowl swaying it from a straight course.

⁶ *Indifferency.*] Uniformity; undeviating course.

⁷ *The outward eye.*] The aperture at which a bowl was loaded was sometimes called the eye.

⁸ *From his own determined aid.*] From continuing the aid or sup-

From a resolved and honourable war,
To a most base and vile-concluded peace.
And why rail I on this commodity?
But for because he hath not wooed me yet :
Not that I have the power to clutch my hand,
When his fair angels¹ would salute my palm ;
But for my hand, as unattempted yet,²
Like a poor beggar railleth on the rich.
Well, whiles I am a beggar, I will rail,
And say—there is no sin but to be rich ;
And being rich, my virtue then shall be,
To say—there is no vice but beggary :
Since kings break faith upon commodity,
Gain, be my lord ! for I will worship thee !

[*Exit.*

port he had determined to give to Arthur. Perhaps, as *Mason* suggested, we should substitute *aim* for *aid*.

¹ *Angels.*] The angel was a coin worth ten shillings.

² *But for my hand, &c.*] But because my hand as being yet untempted by the offer of riches.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The same. The French King's Tent.*

Enter CONSTANCE, ARTHUR, and SALISBURY.

Const. Gone to be married ! gone to swear a peace !
False blood to false blood joined !¹ Gone to be friends !
Shall Lewis have Blanch ? and Blanch those provinces ?
It is not so ; thou hast misspoke, misheard ;
Be well advised,² tell o'er thy tale again :
It cannot be ; thou dost but say 'tis so :
I trust I may not trust thee ; for thy word
Is but the vain breath of a common man :
Believe me, I do not believe thee, man ;
I have a king's oath to the contrary.
Thou shalt be punished for thus frightening me :
For I am sick, and capable³ of fears ;
Oppressed with wrongs, and therefore full of fears ;
A widow, husbandless,⁴ subject to fears ;
A woman, naturally born to fears :
And though thou now confess thou didst but jest,
With my vexed spirits I cannot take a truce,⁵

¹ *False blood, &c.*] France, now false to his vow, united with false England's niece.

² *Well advised.*] Duly mindful ; quite sure.

³ *Capable.*] Susceptible.

⁴ *Husbandless.*] Constance was not at this time 'husbandless,' but married to a third husband, Guy, viscount of Thouars.

⁵ *Take a truce.*] Make peace. Holinshed, in his *King John* (p. 160, l. 45), has the same expression—'They came to a communication, and took truce for fifty days.'

But they will quake and tremble all this day.
 What dost thou mean by shaking of thy head?
 Why dost thou look so sadly on my son?
 What means that hand upon that breast of thine?
 Why holds thine eye that lamentable rheum,¹
 Like a proud river peering o'er his bounds?
 Be these sad signs confirmers of thy words?
 Then speak again: not all thy former tale,
 But this one word,—whether thy tale be true.

Sal. As true, as I believe you think them² false
 That give you cause to prove my saying true.

Const. O, if thou teach me to believe this sorrow,
 Teach thou this sorrow how to make me die;
 And let belief and life encounter so
 As doth the fury of two desperate men,
 Which, in the very meeting, fall, and die.
 Lewis marry Blanch! O, boy, then where art thou?
 France friend with England! what becomes of me?
 Fellow, be gone: I cannot brook thy sight;
 This news hath made thee a most ugly man.

Sal. What other harm have I, good lady, done,
 But spoke the harm that is by others done?

Const. Which harm within itself so heinous is,
 As it³ makes harmful all that speak of it.

Arth. I do beseech you, madam, be content.

Const. If thou that bidst me be content wert grim,
 Ugly, and slanderous to thy mother's womb,
 Full of unpleasing blots and sightless⁴ stains,
 Lame, foolish, crooked, swart, prodigious,⁵

¹ *Rheum.*] Moisture of tears.

² *Them.*] Those persons.

³ *So heinous is, &c.*] Is so hateful that it, &c.

⁴ *Sightless.*] Unsightly.

⁵ *Prodigious.*] Monstrous; preternatural.

Patched with foul moles and eye-offending marks,
 I would not care, I then would be content,
 For then I should not love thee; no, nor thou
 Become thy great birth, nor deserve a crown.
 But thou art fair; and at thy birth, dear boy,
 Nature and fortune joined to make thee great;
 Of Nature's gifts thou mayst with lilies boast,
 And with the half-blown rose: but Fortune, O!
 She is corrupted, changed and won from thee;
 She adulterates hourly with thine uncle John;
 And with her golden hand hath plucked¹ on France
 To tread down fair respect of sovereignty,
 And made his majesty² the bawd to theirs.
 France is a bawd to Fortune and king John;
 That strumpet Fortune,³ that usurping John:
 Tell me, thou fellow, is not France forsworn?
 Envenom him with words; or get thee gone,
 And leave those woes alone, which I alone
 Am bound to under-bear.

Sal.

Pardon me, madam,

I may not go without you to the kings.

Const. Thou mayst, thou shalt, I will not go with thee;
 I will instruct my sorrows to be proud,
 For grief is proud, and makes his owner stoop.⁴

¹ *Plucked.*] Drawn.

² *His majesty.*] Its majesty, viz. that of sovereignty.

³ *That strumpet Fortune.*] Fortune was often called a strumpet, or housewife, on account of her changefulness.

⁴ *Makes his owner stoop.*] Hanmer's proposed substitution of *stout* (that is, high-spirited) for *stoop* has been accepted by most of the succeeding editors. We prefer the old reading, because we apprehend that 'his owner' denotes, not the individual that is proud, but the king, lord, or master of that individual. Constance will not go to the kings, but will have the kings come to her. She immediately adds: 'To me and to the state (throne) of my great grief let kings

To me, and to the state of my great grief,
 Let kings assemble; for my grief's so great
 That no supporter but the huge firm earth
 Can hold it up: here I and sorrows sit;
 Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it.

[She throws herself on the ground.]

Enter KING JOHN, KING PHILIP, LEWIS, BLANCH, ELINOR,
 Bastard, AUSTRIA, and Attendants.

K. Phi. 'Tis true, fair daughter; and this blessed day
 Ever in France shall be kept festival:
 To solemnise this day, the glorious sun
 Stays in his course, and plays the alchymist;¹
 Turning with splendour of his precious eye
 The meagre cloddy earth to glittering gold:
 The yearly course that brings this day about
 Shall never see it but a holiday.

Const. A wicked day, and not a holy day!

[Rising.]

What hath this day deserved? what hath it done,
 That it in golden letters should be set
 Among the high tides in the kalendar?
 Nay, rather turn this day out of the week,
 This day of shame, oppression, perjury:
 Or, if it must stand still, let wives with child
 Pray that their burthens may not fall this day,
 Lest that their hopes prodigiously be crossed:²

assemble;' and in concluding her speech, she says:—'Here (that is, on the ground) is my throne, let kings come bow to it.'

¹ *Plays the alchymist.*] It was a main object with the old alchymists to obtain an elixir that could transmute baser metals into gold.

² *Prodigiously be crossed.*] Be crossed by a monstrous offspring.

That bloody spoil : thou slave, thou wretch, thou coward,
 Thou little valiant, great in villainy !
 Thou ever strong upon the stronger side !
 Thou Fortune's champion, that dost never fight
 But when her humorous¹ ladyship is by
 To teach thee safety ! thou art perjured too,
 And sooth'st up² greatness. What a fool art thou,
 A ramping fool : to brag, and stamp, and swear,
 Upon my party !³ Thou cold-blooded slave,
 Hast thou not spoke like thunder on my side ?
 Been sworn my soldier ? bidding me depend
 Upon thy stars, thy fortune, and thy strength ?
 And dost thou now fall over to my foes ?
 Thou wear a lion's hide ! doff⁴ it for shame,
 And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

Aust. O that a man should speak⁵ those words to me !

Bast. And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

Aust. Thou dar'st not say so, villain, for thy life.

Bast. And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs.

K. John. We like not this ; thou dost forget thyself.

Enter PANDULPH.

K. Phi. Here comes the holy legate of the pope.

Pand. Hail, you anointed deputies of heaven !

To thee, king John, my holy errand is.

I, Pandulph, of fair Milan cardinal,

¹ *Humorous.*] Swayed by fitful humours.

² *Sooth'st up.*] Flatterest.

³ *Upon my party.*] On my side. See p. 4, note 3.

⁴ *Doff.*] To *doff* is a contraction of *do off*, as *don* is of *do on*. The original forms are often met with in writers before Shakspeare's time.

⁵ *That a man should speak.*] That it were a man who spoke.

And from Pope Innocent the legate here,
Do, in his name, religiously demand,
Why thou against the church our holy mother,
So wilfully dost spurn ; and, force perforce,
Keep Stephen Langton, chosen archbishop
Of Canterbury, from that holy see ?
This, in our foresaid holy father's name,
Pope Innocent, I do demand of thee.

K. John. What earthly name to interrogatories
Can task¹ the free breath of a sacred king ?
Thou canst not, cardinal, devise a name
So slight, unworthy, and ridiculous,
To charge me to an answer, as the pope.
Tell him this tale ; and from the mouth of England
Add thus much more,—That no Italian priest
Shall tithe or toll in our dominions ;
But as we under heaven are supreme head,
So, under Him, that great supremacy,
Where we do reign, we will alone uphold,²
Without the assistance of a mortal hand :
So tell the pope ; all reverence set apart
To him and his usurped authority.

K. Phi. Brother of England, you blaspheme in this.

K. John. Though you, and all the kings of Christendom,
Are led so grossly by this meddling priest,

¹ *To interrogatories can task.*] To task to interrogatories is to subject to examination on oath. The contraction *inter'gatories* was common. So in *Merchant of Venice*, v. 1 :

'And charge us there upon inter'gatories
And we will answer all things faithfully.'

So also in *All's Well*, iv. 3, 'Let me answer to the particular of the inter'gatories : demand them singly.'

² *That great supremacy, &c.*] We will ourselves uphold that great supremacy, or headship, within our own realm.

Dreading the curse that money may buy out;¹
 And by the merit of vile gold, dross, dust,
 Purchase corrupted² pardon of a man,
 Who, in that sale, sells pardon from himself;
 Though you, and all the rest so grossly led,
 This juggling witchcraft with revenue cherish:
 Yet I alone, alone do me oppose
 Against the pope, and count his friends my foes.

PAND. Then, by the lawful power that I have,
 Thou shalt stand cursed, and excommunicate:
 And blessed shall he be that doth revolt
 From his allegiance to an heretic;
 And meritorious shall that hand be called,
 Canonised³ and worshipped as a saint,
 That takes away by any secret course
 Thy hateful life.

Const. O, lawful let it be,
 That I have room with Rome⁴ to curse a while!
 Good father cardinal, cry thou, Amen,
 To my keen curses: for, without my wrong,
 There is no tongue hath power to curse him right.

Pand. There's law and warrant, lady, for my curse.

Const. And for mine too. When law can do no right,
 Let it be lawful that law bar no wrong;
 Law cannot give my child his kingdom here,

¹ *Buy out.*] Exempt from.

² *Corrupted.*] Obtained by bribery.

³ *Canonised.*] A quadrisyllable, accented on the second syllable.
 In iii. 4 we have, 'And thou shalt be canonised, cardinal,' where
 the word is a trisyllable, but still having the accent on the second
 syllable.

⁴ *Room with Rome.*] A jingling play is intended here between
room and *Rome*, the two words having been pronounced alike in
 Shakspeare's time. So in *Julius Cæsar*, i. 2, 'Now is it Rome
 indeed, and room enough.'

For he that holds his kingdom holds the law :
Therefore, since law itself is perfect wrong,
How can the law forbid my tongue to curse ?

Pand. Philip of France, on peril of a curse,
Let go the hand of that arch-heretic,
And raise the power of France upon his head,
Unless he do submit himself to Rome.

Eli. Look'st thou pale, France ? do not let go thy hand.

Const. Look to that, devil ! lest that France repent,
And, by disjoining hands, hell lose a soul.

Aust. King Philip, listen to the cardinal.

Bast. And hang a calf's-skin on his recreant limbs.

Aust. Well, ruffian, I must pocket up these wrongs,
Because ——

Bast. Your breeches best may carry them.

K. John. Philip, what say'st thou to the cardinal ?

Const. What should he say but as the cardinal ?¹

Lew. Bethink you, father ; for the difference
Is, purchase of a heavy curse from Rome,
Or the light loss of England for a friend :
Forego the easier.

Blanch. That's² the curse of Rome.

Const. O Lewis, stand fast ; the devil tempts thee here,
In likeness of a new uptrimmed³ bride.

Blanch. The lady Constance speaks not from her faith,
But from her need.

Const. O, if thou grant my need,
Which only lives but by the death of faith,⁴

¹ *As the cardinal.]* As the cardinal says ; in agreement with the cardinal.

² *That is.]* The easier is.

³ *Uptrimmed.]* The old text has *untrimmed*. We adopt Dyce's emendation.

⁴ *Which only lives, &c.]* Which is occasioned only by the viola-

That need must needs infer this principle,
That faith would live again by death of need :
O, then, tread down my need, and faith mounts up,
Keep my need up, and faith is trodden down.

K. John. The king is moved, and answers not to this.

Const. O, be removed from him, and answer well.

Aust. Do so, king Philip, hang no more in doubt.

Bast. Hang nothing but a calf's-skin, most sweet lout.

K. Phi. I am perplexed, and know not what to say.

Pand. What canst thou say but will perplex thee more,
If thou stand excommunicate and cursed ?

K. Phi. Good reverend father, make my person yours,
And tell me how you would bestow yourself.¹

This royal hand and mine are newly knit,
And the conjunction of our inward souls
Married in league, coupled and linked together
With all religious strength of sacred vows.

The latest breath that gave the sound of words
Was deep-sworn faith, peace, amity, true love,
Between our kingdoms and our royal selves :
And even before this truce, but new before,²
No longer than we well could wash our hands,
To clap this royal bargain up of peace,
Heaven knows, they were besmeared and overstained
With slaughter's pencil ; where revenge did paint
The fearful difference of incensed kings :
And shall these hands, so lately purged of blood,

tion of faith on the part of those who were sworn to support my cause. *But,—only,* is emphatic, though pleonastic.

¹ *How you would bestow yourself.*] How you would dispose of yourself. So in 2 *K. Henry IV.* ii. 2, 'See Falstaff bestow himself in his true colours,' and in *As you Like It*, iv. 3, 'Bestows himself like a ripe sister.'

² *But new before.*] But newly, or almost immediately before.

So newly joined in love, so strong in both,
Unyoke this seizure,¹ and this kind regret ?
Play fast and loose with faith ? so jest with heaven,
Make such unconstant children of ourselves,
As now again to snatch our palm from palm ?
Unswear faith sworn ? and on the marriage bed
Of smiling peace to march a bloody host,
And make a riot on the gentle brow
Of true sincerity ? O, holy sir,
My reverend father, let it not be so •
Out of your grace devise, ordain, impose
Some gentle order ; and then we shall be blessed
To do your pleasure, and continue friends.

Pand. All form is formless, order orderless,
Save what is opposite to England's love.
Therefore, to arms ! be champion of our church !
Or let the church, our mother, breathe her curse,
A mother's curse, on her revolting son.
France, thou mayst hold a serpent by the tongue,
A chafed lion by the mortal paw,
A fasting tiger, safer, by the tooth,
Than keep in peace that hand which thou dost hold.

K. Phi. I may disjoin my hand, but not my faith.

Pand. So mak'st thou faith an enemy to faith ;²
And, like a civil war, sett'st oath to oath,
Thy tongue against thy tongue. O, let thy vow
First made to heaven, first be to heaven performed,
That is, to be the champion of our church !
What since thou swor'st, is sworn against thyself,
And may not be performed by thyself :
For that which thou hast sworn to do amiss,

¹ *Unyoke this seizure.*] Let go this hold or grasp.

² *Faith an enemy to faith.*] Thy faith to John at enmity with thy faith towards the church.

Is not amiss when it is truly done ;¹
 And being not done, where doing tends to ill,
 The truth is then most done not doing it :
 The better act of purposes mistook
 Is, to mistake again ; though indirect,²
 Yet indirection thereby grows direct,
 And falsehood falsehood cures, as fire cools fire
 Within the scorched veins of one new burned.
 It is religion that doth make vows kept ;
 But thou hast sworn against religion,
 By what thou swear'st against the thing thou swear'st ;
 And mak'st an oath the surety for thy truth
 Against an oath : the truth thou art unsure
 To swear, swears only not to be forsworn ;³
 Else, what a mockery should it be to swear !
 But thou dost swear only to be forsworn,
 And most forsworn to keep what thou dost swear.⁴
 Therefore, thy later vows against thy first
 Is in thyself rebellion to thyself ;⁵
 And better conquest never canst thou make,
 Than arm thy constant⁶ and thy nobler parts
 Against these giddy loose suggestions :
 Upon which better part⁷ our prayers come in,

¹ *For that which, &c.*] Here Shakspeare's habit of inverting arrangement has, as in many other instances, puzzled his commentators. I believe he meant, 'For to do amiss that which thou hast sworn,' &c. ; that is, to act against what thou hast sworn, when such acting is done according to the truth, is not really amiss.

² *Indirect.*] Not straightforward.

³ *The truth thou art, &c.*] The asserted truth which thou art not fully warranted to swear, swears only against thy being forsworn.

⁴ *And most forsworn, &c.*] And thou wilt be most forsworn in keeping &c.

⁵ *In thyself, &c.*] Rebellion in thyself against thyself.

⁶ *Constant.*] Stedfast ; that cannot change.

⁷ *Upon which better part, &c.*] And then, on this worthier side,

If thou vouchsafe them ; but, if not, then know,
 The peril of our curses light on thee
 So heavy, as ¹ thou shalt not shake them off,
 But, in despair, die under their black weight.

Aust. Rebellion, flat rebellion !

Bast.

Will't not be ?

Will not a calf's-skin stop that mouth of thine ?

Lew. Father, to arms !

Blanch.

Upon thy wedding day ?

Against the blood that thou hast married ?
 What, shall our feast be kept with slaughtered men ?
 Shall braying trumpets, and loud churlish drums,
 Clamours of hell, be measures to our pomp ? ²
 O husband, hear me !—ay, alack, how new
 Is husband in my mouth !—even for that name
 Which till this time my tongue did ne'er pronounce,
 Upon my knee I beg, go not to arms
 Against mine uncle.

Const.

O, upon my knee,
 Made hard with kneeling, I do pray to thee,
 Thou virtuous Dauphin, alter not the doom
 Fore-thought by heaven.

Blanch. Now shall I see thy love. What motive may
 Be stronger with thee than the name of wife ?

Const. That which upholdeth him that thee upholds,
 His honour : O, thine honour, Lewis, thine honour !

Lew. I muse ³ your majesty doth seem so cold,
 When such profound respects do pull you on.

thou wilt have the advantage of our prayers, if thou wilt accept them.

¹ *As.]* That. Formerly very often used in this way.

² *Measures to our pomp.]* For keeping time to our wedding procession. *Measures* were dancing paces. *Pomp* denoted processions.

³ *I muse.]* I wonder.

Pand. I will denounce a curse upon his head.

K. Phi. Thou shalt not need : England, I will fall from thee.

Cons. O fair return of banished majesty !¹

Eli. O foul revolt of French inconstancy !

K. John. France, thou shalt rue this hour within this hour.

Bast. Old Time the clock-setter, that bald sexton, Time, Is it as he will ? well then, France shall rue.

Blanch. The sun's o'ercast with blood : fair day adieu ! Which is the side that I must go withal ?

I am with both : each army hath a hand,
And, in their rage, I having hold of both,
They whirl asunder, and dismember me.

Husband, I cannot pray that thou mayst win ;
Uncle, I needs must pray that thou mayst lose ;
Father, I may not wish the fortune thine ;
Grandame, I will not wish thy wishes thrive :
Whoever wins, on that side shall I lose ;
Assured loss, before the match be played.

Lew. Lady, with me ; with me thy fortune lies.

Blanch. There where my fortune lives, there my life dies.

K. John. Cousin, go draw our puissance together.

[*Exit Bastard.*

France, I am burned up with inflaming wrath,
A rage whose heat hath this condition²
That nothing can allay, nothing but blood,
The blood, and dearest-valued blood, of France.

K. Phi. Thy rage shall burn thee up, and thou shalt turn

¹ *O fair return, &c.*] O honourable return of the majesty which thou didst banish from thee.

² *Condition.*] Temper.

To ashes, ere our blood shall quench that fire :
Look to thyself, thou art in jeopardy.

K. John. No more than he that threatens.—To arms ! let's
hie. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The same. Plains near Angiers.*

*Alarums ; Excursions. Enter the Bastard with AUSTRIA'S
Head.*

Bast. Now, by my life, this day grows wondrous hot ;
Some airy devil¹ hovers in the sky,
And pours down mischief. Austria's head, lie there ;²
While Philip breathes.

Enter KING JOHN, ARTHUR, and HUBERT.

K. John. Hubert, keep this boy :—Philip, make up :
My mother is assailed in our tent,
And ta'en, I fear.

Bast. My lord, I rescued her ;
Her highness is in safety, fear you not :
But on, my liege ; for very little pains
Will bring this labour to an happy end. [*Exeunt.*]

¹ *Airy devil.*] The Platonists supposed there were distinctive demons in the elements of fire, air, earth, and water. So in Milton's *Il Penseroso*, 93, 'And of those demons that are found in fire, air, flood, or under ground.' See the Editor's *Hamlet*, p. 11, note 1.

² *Austria's head, lie there.*] Holinshed says that the Bastard, to avenge the death of his father, killed the Viscount of Lymoges in the year following. But Shakspeare has followed the mistake in the old play, where Austria is called 'Lymoges the Austrich duke.'

SCENE III.—*The same.*

Alarums ; Excursions ; Retreat. Enter KING JOHN, ELINOR, ARTHUR, the Bastard, HUBERT, and Lords.

K. John. So shall it be ; your grace shall stay behind,

[*To ELINOR.*

So strongly guarded.—Cousin, look not sad,

[*To ARTHUR.*

Thy grandame loves thee, and thy uncle will

As dear be to thee as thy father was.

Arth. O, this will make my mother die with grief.

K. John. Cousin [*to the Bastard*], away for England ;
haste before :

And, ere our coming, see thou shake the bags

Of hoarding abbots ; imprisoned angels¹

Set at liberty ; the fat ribs of peace

Must by the hungry now be fed upon :

Use our commission in his² utmost force.

Bast. Bell, book, and candle³ shall not drive me back,
When gold and silver beck me to come on.

¹ *Imprisoned angels.*] Locked-up gold. An allusion to the coin called an angel. In the old play we find John saying to the Bastard :

‘ Ransack the abbeyes, cloisters, priories,
Convert their coin unto my soldiers’ use.’

² *His.*] Its.

³ *Bell, book, and candle.*] These were used in the penal ceremony of excommunication. In Bishop Bale’s *Kynge Johan*, of which we have made mention in the preface, John is denounced by Pandulph in the following manner :—

‘ For as moch as kyng Johan doth Holy Church so handle,
Here I do curse hym wyth crosse, boke, bell, and candle.

I leave your highness.—Grandame, I will pray
(If ever I remember to be holy)

For your fair safety ; so I kiss your hand.

Eli. Farewell, gentle cousin.

K. John. Coz, farewell. [*Exit Bastard.*]

Eli. Come hither, little kinsman ; hark, a word.

[*She takes ARTHUR aside.*]

K. John. Come hither, Hubert. O my gentle Hubert,
We owe thee much ; within this wall of flesh
There is a soul counts thee her creditor,
And with advantage means to pay thy love :
And, my good friend, thy voluntary oath
Lives in this bosom, dearly cherished.
Give me thy hand. I had a thing to say,—
But I will fit it with some better time.¹

By heaven, Hubert, I am almost ashamed
To say what good respect I have of thee.

Hub. I am much bounden to your majesty.

K. John. Good friend, thou hast no cause to say so yet :
But thou shalt have : and, creep time ne'er so slow,
Yet it shall come, for me to do thee good.
I had a thing to say,—but let it go :
The sun is in the heaven, and the proud day
Attended with the pleasures of the world,
Is all too wanton, and too full of gauds,
To give me audience.—If the midnight bell

Lyke as this same roode turneth now from me his face,
So God I requyre to sequester hym of his grace.

As this boke doth speare by my worke mannuall,

I wyll God to close uppe from hym his benefyttes all.

As this burnyng flame goth from this candle in syght,

I wyll God to put hym from his eternal lyght.

I take hym from Crist, and after the sownd of this bell,

Both body and soule I geve hym to the devyll of hell.'

¹ *Time.*] The old copies have *tune*.

Did with his iron tongue and brazen mouth
 Sound one into the drowsy ear of night ;¹
 If this same were a churchyard where we stand,
 And thou possessed with a thousand wrongs ;
 Or if that surly spirit, melancholy,
 Had baked thy blood, and made it heavy-thick,—
 Which, else, runs tickling up and down the veins,
 Making that idiot, laughter, keep² men's eyes,
 And strain their cheeks to idle merriment ;
 A passion hateful to my purposes :—
 Or if that thou couldst see me without eyes,
 Hear me without thine ears, and make reply
 Without a tongue, using conceit³ alone,
 Without eyes, ears, and harmful sound of words :
 Then, in despite of brooded, watchful day,⁴
 I would into thy bosom pour my thoughts :
 But ah, I will not :—yet I love thee well ;
 And, by my troth, I think thou lov'st me well.

Hub. So well, that what you bid me undertake,
 Though that my death were adjunct to my act,
 By heaven, I would do it !

K. John. Do not I know thou wouldst ?
 Good Hubert, Hubert, Hubert, throw thine eye
 On yon young boy : I'll tell thee what, my friend,

¹ *Sound one, &c.*] *One* is the poetical midnight hour. 'The bell then beating one' are the words in which Bernardo tells the moment of the appearance of Hamlet's ghost. The old text has 'Sound *on* into the drowsy *race* of night.' *On* was often written for *one* ; but *race* is obviously a corruption, and it seems almost certain that Shakspeare wrote *care*.

² *Keep.*] Occupy.

³ *Conceit.*] Conception.

⁴ *Brooded, watchful day.*] *Brooded* means having a brood, or brooding ; *day* being regarded as having a watchful eye, like that of a brooding bird.

He is a very serpent in my way ;
 And wheresoe'er this foot of mine doth tread
 He lies before me : dost thou understand me ?
 Thou art his keeper.

Hub. And I'll keep him so,
 That he shall not offend your majesty.

K. John. Death.

Hub. My lord !

K. John. A grave.

Hub. He shall not live.

K. John. Enough.

I could be merry now : Hubert, I love thee.
 Well, I'll not say what I intend for thee :
 Remember.—Madam, fare you well :
 I'll send those powers o'er to your majesty.

Eli. My blessing go with thee !

K. John. For England, cousin, go :
 Hubert shall be your man, attend on you
 With all true duty.—On towards Calais, ho ! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*The same. The French King's Tent.*

Enter KING PHILIP, LEWIS, PANDULPH, and Attendants.

K. Phi. So, by a roaring tempest on the flood,
 A whole armado of convicted¹ sail
 Is scattered and disjoined from fellowship.

Pand. Courage and comfort ! all shall yet go well.

K. Phi. What can go well, when we have run so ill ?
 Are we not beaten ? Is not Angiers lost ?
 Arthur ta'en prisoner ? divers dear friends slain ?

¹ *Convicted.*] This word may have been used here to signify *overpowered* ; but *convicted*, which agrees better with the context, is probably the right word.

And bloody England into England gone,
O'erbearing interruption, spite of France?

Lew. What he hath won, that hath he fortified :
So hot a speed with such advice¹ disposed,
Such temperate order in so fierce a course,
Doth want example. Who hath read or heard
Of any kindred action like to this?

K. Phi. Well could I bear that England had this praise,
So we could find some pattern of our shame.
Look, who comes here ! a grave unto a soul,
Holding the eternal spirit against her will,

Enter CONSTANCE.

In the vile prison of afflicted breath :
I prithee, lady, go away with me.

Const. Lo, now ! now see the issue of your peace !

K. Phi. Patience, good lady ! comfort, gentle Constance !

Const. No, I defy² all counsel, all redress,
But that which ends all counsel, true redress.
Death, death, O amiable lovely death !
Thou odoriferous stench ! sound rottenness !
Arise forth from the couch of lasting night,
Thou hate and terror to prosperity,
And I will kiss thy detestable bones,
And put my eyeballs in thy vaulty brows,
And ring these fingers with thy household worms,
And stop this gap of breath with fulsome dust,
And be a carrion monster like thyself.
Come, grin on me ; and I will think thou smil'st,
And buss thee as thy wife ! Misery's love,
O, come to me !

¹ *Advice.*] Considerateness.

² *Defy.*] Abjure.

K. Phi. O fair affliction, peace !

Const. No, no, I will not, having breath to cry :
O that my tongue were in the thunder's mouth !
Then with a passion would I shake the world,
And rouse from sleep that fell anatomy,¹
Which cannot hear a lady's feeble voice,
Which scorns a modern invocation.²

Pand. Lady, you utter madness, and not sorrow.

Const. Thou art unholy to belie me so.
I am not mad : this hair I tear is mine ;
My name is Constance, I was Geoffrey's wife ;
Young Arthur is my son, and he is lost.
I am not mad ;—I would to heaven I were ;
For then 'tis like I should forget myself :
O, if I could, what grief should I forget !—
Preach some philosophy to make me mad,
And thou shalt be canonised, cardinal.
For, being not mad, but sensible of grief,
My reasonable part produces reason
How I may be delivered of these woes,
And teaches me to kill or hang myself :
If I were mad, I should forget my son,
Or madly think a babe of clouts were he.
I am not mad : too well, too well I feel
The different plague of each calamity.

K. Phi. Bind up those tresses : O, what love I note
In the fair multitude of those her hairs !
Where but by chance a silver drop hath fallen,

¹ *That fell anatomy.*] By an *anatomy* is meant the skeleton form of death.

² *A modern invocation.*] An ordinary invocation. Shakspeare repeatedly uses *modern* in the sense of common, trite, ordinary. So in *Macbeth*, iv. 3, 'Violent sorrow seems a modern ecstasy;' and in *As you Like it*, ii. 7, 'Full of wise saws and modern instances.'

Even to that drop ten thousand wiry friends
Do glue themselves in sociable grief;
Like true, inseparable, faithful loves,
Sticking together in calamity.

Const. To England if you will!¹

K. Phi. Bind up your hairs.

Const. Yes, that I will. And wherefore will I do it?
I tore them from their bonds, and cried aloud,
*O that these hands could so redeem my son,
As they have given these hairs their liberty!*
But now I envy at their liberty,
And will again commit them to their bonds,
Because my poor child is a prisoner.
And, father cardinal, I have heard you say
That we shall see and know our friends in heaven;
If that be true, I shall see my boy again:
For, since the birth of Cain, the first male child,
To him that did but yesterday suspire,
There was not such a gracious² creature born.
But now will canker sorrow eat my bud,
And chase the native beauty from his cheek,
And he will look as hollow as a ghost,
As dim and meagre as an ague's fit,
And so he'll die: and, rising so again,
When I shall meet him in the court of heaven
I shall not know him: therefore never, never
Must I behold my pretty Arthur more.

Pand. You hold too heinous a respect of grief.

Const. He talks to me that never had a son.

K. Phi. You are as fond of grief as of your child.

¹ *To England, if you will.*] The import of this has been variously conjectured. I take the sense to be—*I will to England, if you will allow me.*

² *Gracious.*] Full of grace, both of body and mind.

Const. Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form;
Then have I reason to be fond of grief.
Fare you well: had you such a loss as I,
I could give better comfort than you do.
I will not keep this form upon my head,

[*Tearing off her head-dress.*

When there is such disorder in my wit.

O Lord! my boy, my Arthur, my fair son!

My life, my joy, my food, my all the world!

My widow-comfort, and my sorrows' cure! [*Exit.*

K. Phi. I fear some outrage, and I'll follow her. [*Exit.*

Lew. There's nothing in this world can make me joy:
Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale

Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man;

And bitter shame hath spoiled the sweet world's taste,
That it yields nought but shame and bitterness.

Pand. Before the curing of a strong disease,

Even in the instant of repair and health,

The fit is strongest; evils that take leave,

On their departure most of all show¹ evil:

What have you lost by losing of this day?

Lew. All days of glory, joy, and happiness.

Pand. If you had won it, certainly, you had.

No, no: when fortune means to men most good,

She looks upon them with a threatening eye.

'Tis strange to think how much king John hath lost

In this, which he accounts so clearly won:

Are not you grieved that Arthur is his prisoner?

Lew. As heartily as he is glad he hath him.

¹ *Show.]* Appear.

Pand. Your mind is all as youthful as your blood.
Now hear me speak with a prophetic spirit ;
For even the breath of what I mean to speak
Shall blow each dust, each straw, each little rub,
Out of the path which shall directly lead
Thy foot to England's throne. And, therefore, mark :
John hath seized Arthur, and it cannot be
That, whiles warm life plays in that infant's veins,
The misplaced John should entertain an hour,
One minute, nay, one quiet breath of rest.
A sceptre snatched with an unruly hand
Must be as boisterously maintained as gained :
And he that stands upon a slippery place
Makes nice of no vile hold to stay him up :
That John may stand then, Arthur needs must fall ;
So be it, for it cannot be but so.

Lew. But what shall I gain by young Arthur's fall ?

Pand. You, in the right of lady Blanch your wife,
May then make all the claim that Arthur did.

Lew. And lose it, life and all, as Arthur did.

Pand. How green you are, and fresh in this old world !
John lays you plots ; the times conspire with you—
For he that steeps his safety in true blood
Shall find but bloody safety and untrue.
This act, so evilly borne, shall cool the hearts
Of all his people, and freeze up their zeal,
That none so small advantage shall step forth
To check his reign, but they will cherish it.
No natural exhalation in the sky,
No scope of nature,¹ no distempered day,
No common wind, no custom'd event,

¹ *No scope of nature.*] No ordinary indication of nature. Most modern editions have *scope*.

But they will pluck away his natural cause,¹
 And call them meteors, prodigies, and signs,
 Abortives, presages, and tongues of heaven,
 Plainly denouncing vengeance upon John.

Jew. May be, he will not touch young Arthur's life,
 But hold² himself safe in his prisonment.

Pand. O, sir, when he shall hear of your approach,
 If that young Arthur be not gone already,
 Even at that news he dies: and then the hearts
 Of all his people shall revolt from him,
 And kiss the lips of unacquainted change,
 And pick strong matter of revolt and wrath
 Out of the bloody fingers' ends of John.
 Methinks, I see this hurly all on foot.
 And, O, what better matter breeds for you
 Than I have named!—The bastard Faulconbridge
 Is now in England, ransacking the church,
 Offending charity. If but a dozen French
 Were there in arms, they would be as a call
 To train³ ten thousand English to their side;
 Or, as a little snow tumbled about
 Anon becomes a mountain. O noble Dauphin,
 Go with me to the king; 'tis wonderful
 What may be wrought out of their discontent,
 Now that their souls are topfull of offence.
 For England go; I will whet on the king.

Lew. Strong reasons make strange actions.

Let us go;
 If you say ay, the king will not say no.

[*Exeunt.*]

¹ *Pluck away his natural cause.*] Put aside its natural cause.

² *Hold.*] Account.

³ *As a call to train, &c.*] Like a bird-call to draw, &c.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Room in a Castle.*

Enter HUBERT *and Two Attendants.*

Hub. Heat me these irons hot, and look thou stand
Within the arras :¹ when I strike my foot
Upon the bosom of the ground, rush forth
And bind the boy, which you shall find with me,
Fast to the chair : be heedful : hence, and watch.

1 Attend. I hope your warrant will bear out the deed.

Hub. Uncleanly scruples ! Fear not you : look to 't.

[Exeunt Attendants.]

Young lad, come forth ; I have to say with you.

Enter ARTHUR.

Arth. Good morrow, Hubert.

Hub. Good morrow, little prince.

Arth. As little prince (having so great a title
To be more prince) as may be.—You are sad.

Hub. Indeed I have been merrier.

Arth. Mercy on me !

Methinks, nobody should be sad but I :
Yet, I remember, when I was in France,
Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,
Only for wantonness. By my christendom,
So I were out of prison, and kept sheep,

¹ *Within the arras.] Behind the wall curtains.*

I should be as merry as the day is long ;
And so I would be here, but that I doubt
My uncle practises more harm to me :
He is afraid of me, and I of him :
Is it my fault that I was Geffrey's son ?
No, indeed is't not ; and I would to heaven
I were your son, so you would love me, Hubert.

Hub. If I talk to him, with his innocent prate
He will awake my mercy, which lies dead ;
Therefore I will be sudden, and despatch. [*Aside.*

Arth. Are you sick, Hubert ? you look pale to-day :
In sooth, I would you were a little sick,
That I might sit all night and watch with you :
I warrant I love you more than you do me.

Hub. His words do take possession of my bosom.
Read here, young Arthur. [*Showing a paper.*

How now, foolish rheum !¹ [*Aside.*
Turning spiteous torture out of door ?

I must be brief, lest resolution drop
Out at mine eyes in tender womanish tears.
Can you not read it ? is it not fair writ ?

Arth. Too fairly, Hubert, for so foul effect :
Must you with hot irons burn out both mine eyes ?

Hub. Young boy, I must.

Arth. And will you ?

Hub. And I will.

Arth. Have you the heart ? When your head did but
ache,

I knit my handkerchief about your brows,
(The best I had, a princess wrought it me,
And I did never ask it you again,)
And with my hand, at midnight, held your head ;

¹ *Rheum.*] Tears.

And, like the watchful minutes to the hour,
Still and anon cheered up the heavy time,
Saying, *What lack you ?* and, *Where lies your grief ?*
Or, *What good love may I perform for you ?*
Many a poor man's son would have lain still,
And ne'er have spoke a loving word to you ;
But you at your sick service had a prince.
Nay, you may think my love was crafty love,
And call it cunning ; do, an if you will :
If heaven be pleased that you must use me ill,
Why, then you must.—Will you put out mine eyes ?
These eyes that never did, nor never shall,
So much as frown on you ?

Hub. I have sworn to do it ;
And with hot irons must I burn them out.

Arth. Ah, none, but in this iron age, would do it !
The iron of itself, though heat red-hot,
Approaching near these eyes, would drink my tears,
And quench his fiery indignation,
Even in the matter of mine innocence :
Nay, after that, consume away in rust,
But for containing fire to harm mine eye.
Are you more stubborn-hard than hammered iron ?
An if an angel should have come to me,
And told me Hubert should put out mine eyes,
I would not have believed him : no tongue but Hubert's—

Hub. Come forth ! [*Stamps*

Re-enter Attendants, with Cords, Irons, &c.

Do as I bid you do.

Arth. O, save me, Hubert, save me ! my eyes are out,
Even with the fierce looks of these bloody men.

Hub. Give me the iron, I say, and bind him here.

Arth. Alas ! what need you be so boisterous-rough ?
I will not struggle, I will stand stone-still.
For heaven sake, Hubert, let me not be bound !
Nay, hear me, Hubert ! drive these men away,
And I will sit as quiet as a lamb ;
I will not stir, nor wince, nor speak a word,
Nor look upon the iron angrily :
Thrust but these men away, and I'll forgive you,
Whatever torment you do put me to.

Hub. Go, stand within ; let me alone with him.

1 Attend. I am best pleased to be from such a deed.

[*Exeunt Attendants.*]

Arth. Alas ! I then have chid away my friend ;
He hath a stern look, but a gentle heart :
Let him come back, that his compassion may
Give life to yours.

Hub. Come, boy, prepare yourself.

Arth. Is there no remedy ?

Hub. None, but to lose your eyes.

Arth. O heaven ! that there were but a mote in yours,
A grain, a dust, a gnat, a wandering hair,
Any annoyance in that precious sense !
Then, feeling what small things are boisterous there,
Your vile intent must needs seem horrible.

Hub. Is this your promise ? go to, hold your tongue.

Arth. Hubert, the utterance of a brace of tongues
Must needs want pleading for a pair of eyes :
Let me not hold my tongue ; let me not, Hubert !
Or, Hubert, if you will, cut out my tongue,
So I may keep mine eyes. O, spare mine eyes ;
Though to no use but still to look on you !
Lo, by my troth, the instrument is cold,
And would not harm me.

Hub. I can heat it, boy.

Arth. No, in good sooth ; the fire is dead with grief,
Being create for comfort, to be used ¹
In undeserved extremes : see else yourself ;
There is no malice in this burning coal ;
The breath of heaven hath blown his spirit out,
And strewed repentant ashes on his head.

Hub. But with my breath I can revive it, boy.

Arth. An if you do, you will but make it blush
And glow with shame of your proceedings, Hubert :
Nay, it, perchance, will sparkle in your eyes,
And, like a dog that is compelled to fight,
Snatch at his master that doth tarre him on.²
All things that you should use to do me wrong
Deny their office : only you do lack
That mercy which fierce fire and iron extends,
Creatures of note for mercy-lacking uses.³

Hub. Well, see to live. I will not touch thine eyes
For all the treasure that thine uncle owes :
Yet am I sworn, and I did purpose, boy,
With this same very iron to burn them out.

Arth. O, now you look like Hubert ! all this while
You were disguised.

Hub. Peace, no more : Adieu !
Your uncle must not know but you are dead :
I'll fill these dogged spies with false reports ;

¹ *To be used.*] With grief that it should be used.

² *Tarre him on.*] Set him on ; incite him. So in *Hamlet*, ii. 2,
'The nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy ;' and in
Troilus and Cressida, i. 3 :

'Two curs shall tame each other, Pride alone
Must tarre the mastiff on.'

³ *Creatures of note, &c.*] Things noted for uses the reverse of
merciful.

And, pretty child, sleep doubtless and secure¹
That Hubert, for the wealth of all the world,
Will not offend thee.

Arth. O heaven!—I thank you, Hubert.

Hub. Silence! no more. Go closely² in with me;
Much danger do I undergo for thee. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—*A Room of State in the Palace.*

*Enter KING JOHN crowned; PEMBROKE, SALISBURY, and
other Lords. The KING takes his State.*

K. John. Here once again we sit, once again crowned,
And looked upon, I hope, with cheerful eyes.

Pem. This *once again*, but that your highness pleased,
Was once superfluous; you were crowned before,
And that high royalty was ne'er plucked off;
The faiths of men ne'er stained with revolt;
Fresh expectation troubled not the land
With any longed-for change or better state.

Sal. Therefore, to be possessed with double pomp,
To guard³ a title that was rich before,
To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet,
To smooth the ice, or add another hue
Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.

Pem. But that your royal pleasure must be done,
This act is as an ancient tale new told,

¹ *Doubtless and secure.*] Assured and confident.

² *Closely.*] Privately.

³ *To guard.*] To guard a garment was to trim it with a border.

And, in the last repeating, troublesome,
Being urged at a time unseasonable.

Sal. In this, the antique and well-noted face
Of plain old form is much disfigured ;
And, like a shifted wind unto a sail,
It makes the course of thoughts to fetch about ;¹
Startles and frights consideration,
Makes sound opinion sick, and truth suspected,
For putting on so new a fashioned robe.

Pem. When workmen strive to do better than well,
They do confound their skill in covetousness ;
And oftentimes excusing of a fault
Doth make the fault the worse by the excuse ;
As patches set upon a little breach
Discredit more in hiding of the fault,
Than did the fault before it was so patched.

Sal. To this effect, before you were new crowned,
We breathed our counsel ; but it pleased your highness
To overbear it, and we are all well pleased,
Since all and every part of what we would,
Doth make a stand at what your highness will.

K. John. Some reasons of this double coronation
I have possessed you with, and think them strong ;
And more, more strong,² when lesser is my fear,
I shall indue you with : meantime, but ask
What you would have reformed that is not well,
And well shall you perceive how willingly
I will both hear and grant you your requests.

Pem. Then I, as one that am the tongue of these,

¹ *To fetch about.*] To turn or shift about. 'We fetched a compass and came to Rhegium.' Acts xxviii. 13.

² *And more, more strong, &c.*] And I shall indue you with more reasons, more strong, &c.

To sound¹ the purposes of all their hearts,
 Both for myself and them, (but, chief of all,
 Your safety, for the which myself and them
 Bend their best studies,) heartily request
 The enfranchisement of Arthur; whose restraint
 Doth move the murmuring lips of discontent
 To break into this dangerous argument,²—
 If what in rest you have, in right you hold,³
 Why, then, your fears, which (as they say) attend
 The steps of wrong should move you to mew up
 Your tender kinsman, and to choke his days
 With barbarous ignorance, and deny his youth
 The rich advantage of good exercise.
 That the time's enemies may not have this
 To grace occasions, let it be our suit
 That you have bid us ask his liberty;
 Which for our goods we do no further ask,
 Than whereupon our weal, on you depending,
 Counts it your weal he have his liberty.

K. John. Let it be so; I do commit his youth
 To your direction:—

Enter HUBERT.

Hubert, what news with you? [*Taking him apart.*]

Pem. This is the man should do the bloody deed;
 He showed his warrant to a friend of mine:

¹ *To sound.*] To speak or utter.

² *To break into, &c.*] To broach the following dangerous argument.

³ *If what in rest you have, &c.*] For *in right* I would read *un-right*; the argument then is—*Men* will think that if you hold wrongly the sceptre which you have in rest, then it is to be supposed that your fears, &c. Dyce, retaining the expression *in right*, would transpose the words *then* and *should*, and make a question of the sentence, 'Why should your fears,' &c.

The image of a wicked heinous fault
Lives in his eye : that close aspect of his
Doth show the mood of a much-troubled breast,
And I do fearfully believe 'tis done,
What we so feared he had a charge to do.

Sal. The colour of the king doth come and go
Between his purpose and his conscience,
Like heralds 'twixt two dreadful battles set :
His passion is so ripe, it needs must break.

Pem. And, when it breaks, I fear will issue thence
The foul corruption of a sweet child's death.

K. John. We cannot hold mortality's strong hand :—

[*Coming forward.*]

Good lords, although my will to give is living,
The suit which you demand is gone and dead :
He tells us, Arthur is deceased to-night.

Sal. Indeed we feared his sickness was past cure.

Pem. Indeed we heard how near his death he was,
Before the child himself felt he was sick :
This must be answered, either here or hence.

K. John. Why do you bend such solemn brows on me?
Think you I bear the shears of destiny?
Have I commandment on the pulse of life?

Sal. It is apparent¹ foul play ; and 'tis shame
That greatness should so grossly offer it :
So thrive it in your game !² and so farewell.

Pem. Stay yet, lord Salisbury : I'll go with thee,
And find the inheritance of this poor child,
His little kingdom of a forced grave.
That blood which owed³ the breadth of all this isle,
Three foot of it doth hold. Bad world the while !

¹ *Apparent.*] Manifest.

² *So thrive it, &c.*] That is, may shame come to it.

³ *Owed.*] Owned.

This must not be thus borne; this will break out
To all our sorrows, and ere long, I doubt. [*Exeunt Lords.*]

K. John. They burn in indignation. I repent.
There is no sure foundation set on blood;
No certain life achieved by others' death.

Enter a Messenger.

A fearful eye thou hast. Where is that blood
That I have seen inhabit in those cheeks?
So foul a sky clears not without a storm:
Pour down thy weather.—How goes all in France?

Mess. From France to England.¹—Never such a power,
For any foreign preparation,
Was levied in the body of a land!
The copy of your speed is learned by them;
For, when you should be told they do prepare,
The tidings come that they are all arrived.

K. John. O, where hath our intelligence been drunk?
Where hath it slept? Where is my mother's care,²
That such an army could be drawn in France,
And she not hear of it?

Mess. My liege, her ear
Is stopped with dust; the first of April died
Your noble mother. And, as I hear, my lord,
The Lady Constance in a frenzy died
Three days before:³ but this from rumour's tongue
I idly heard; if true, or false, I know not.

¹ *From France to England.*] That is, all in France goes from France to England.

² *Care.*] It is probable from the context that *care* was Shakespeare's word.

³ *Three days before.*] It was really three *years* before. The Lady Constance died at Nantes in 1201; Queen Elinor at the Abbey of Fontevraux, in 1204.

K. John. Withhold thy speed, dreadful occasion !
O, make a league with me, till I have pleased
My discontented peers !—What ! mother dead !
How wildly then walks my estate in France.
Under whose conduct came those powers of France,
That thou for truth giv'st out are landed here ?

Mess. Under the dauphin.

Enter the Bastard and PETER of Pomfret.

K. John. Thou hast made me giddy
With these ill tidings.—Now what says the world
To your proceedings ? do not seek to stuff
My head with more ill news, for it is full.

Bast. But if you be afeard to hear the worst,
Then let the worst, unheard, fall on your head.

K. John. Bear with me, cousin ; for I was amazed¹
Under the tide ; but now I breathe again
Aloft the flood, and can give audience
To any tongue, speak it of what it will.

Bast. How I have sped among the clergymen,²
The sums I have collected shall express.
But, as I travelled hither through the land,
I find the people strangely fantasied,
Possessed with rumours, full of idle dreams ;
Not knowing what they fear, but full of fear.
And here's a prophet, that I brought with me
From forth the streets of Pomfret, whom I found
With many hundreds treading on his heels ;
To whom he sung, in rude harsh-sounding rhymes,

¹ *Amazed.*] Confounded.

² *How I have sped, &c.*] It will be remembered that K. John had sent the Bastard to England to 'shake the bags of hoarding abbots,' iii. 3.

That ere the next Ascension-day at noon
Your highness should deliver up your crown.

K. John. Thou idle dreamer, wherefore didst thou so ?

Peter. Foreknowing that the truth will fall out so.

K. John. Hubert, away with him ; imprison him ;
And on that day at noon, whereon, he says,
I shall yield up my crown, let him be hanged :
Deliver him to safety, and return,
For I must use thee. [*Exit* HUBERT, with PETER.

O my gentle cousin,
Hear'st thou the news abroad, who are arrived ?

Bast. The French, my lord ; men's mouths are full of it.
Besides, I met lord Bigot and lord Salisbury,
(With eyes as red as new-enkindled fire,)
And others more, going to seek the grave
Of Arthur, who, they say, is killed to-night
On your suggestion.

K. John. Gentle kinsman, go,
And thrust thyself into their companies,
I have a way to win their loves again :
Bring them before me.

Bast. I will seek them out.

K. John. Nay, but make haste, the better foot before.
O, let me have no subject-enemies,
When adverse foreigners affright my towns
With dreadful pomp of stout invasion !
Be Mercury, set feathers to thy heels,
And fly like thought from them to me again.

Bast. The spirit of the time shall teach me speed.

[*Exit.*

K. John. Spoke like a spriteful noble gentleman.
Go after him ; for he, perhaps, shall need
Some messenger betwixt me and the peers,
And be thou he.

Mess. With all my heart, my liege.

[*Exit.*

K. John. My mother dead!

Re-enter HUBERT.

Hub. My lord, they say five moons were seen to-night:
Four fixed, and the fifth did whirl about
The other four in wondrous motion.

K. John. Five moons?

Hub. Old men and beldams in the streets
Do prophesy upon it dangerously:
Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths,
And when they talk of him, they shake their heads,
And whisper one another in the ear;
And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist,
Whilst he that hears makes fearful action,
With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.
I saw a smith stand with his hammer thus,
The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool,
With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news;
Who, with his shears and measure in his hand,
Standing on slippers, (which his nimble haste
Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet,)
Told of a many thousand warlike French,
That were embattailed and ranked in Kent;
Another lean unwashed artificer
Cuts off his tale, and talks of Arthur's death,

K. John. Why seek'st thou to possess me with these
fears?

Why urgent thou so oft young Arthur's death?
Thy hand hath murdered him: I had a mighty cause
To wish him dead, but thou hadst none to kill him.

Hub. No had,¹ my lord! why, did you not provoke me?

¹ *No had.*] No cause had? Had no cause? Or perhaps *no* is

K. John. It is the curse of kings to be attended
By slaves that take their humours for a warrant
To break within the bloody house of life ;¹
And, on the winking of authority,
To understand a law ; to know the meaning²
Of dangerous majesty, when, perchance, it frowns
More upon humour than advised respect.

Hub. Here is your hand and seal for what I did.

K. John. O, when the last account 'twixt heaven and
earth
Is to be made, then shall this hand and seal
Witness against us to damnation !
How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
Makes ill deeds done ! Hadst thou not been by,
A fellow by the hand of nature marked,
Quoted,³ and signed, to do a deed of shame,
This murder had not come into my mind :
But, taking note of thy abhorred aspect,
Finding thee fit for bloody villainy,
Apt, liable, to be employed in danger,
I faintly broke with thee⁴ of Arthur's death ;
And thou. to be endeared to a king,
Made it no conscience to destroy a prince.

Hub. My lord,—

K. John. Hadst thou but shook thy head, or made a
pause,

used for *not*, as it often is now in the North. At all events the form of speech in the text was of common occurrence in our old writers.

¹ *That take their humours, &c.*] It is supposed that the poet here alludes to the conduct of Davison, Queen Elizabeth's secretary, in relation to the warrant for the execution of Mary Queen of Scots. The murder of Thomas à Becket may also be referred to.

² *To know the meaning.*] To construe the meaning.

³ *Quoted.*] Indicated ; pointed out.

⁴ *Broke with thee.*] Broached to thee the subject.

When I spake darkly what I purposed,
 Or turned an eye of doubt upon my face,
 As bid me tell my tale in express words,
 Deep shame had struck me dumb, made me break off,
 And those thy fears might have wrought fears in me :
 But thou didst understand me by my signs,
 And didst in signs again parley with sin ;
 Yea, without stop, didst let thy heart consent,
 And, consequently, thy rude hand to act
 The deed, which both our tongues held vile to name.
 Out of my sight, and never see me more !
 My nobles leave me, and my state¹ is braved,
 Even at my gates, with ranks of foreign powers :
 Nay, in the body of this fleshly land,
 This kingdom, this confine of blood and breath,²
 Hostility and civil tumult reigns
 Between my conscience and my cousin's death.

Hub. Arm you against your other enemies,
 I'll make a peace between your soul and you ;
 Young Arthur is alive. This hand of mine
 Is yet a maiden and an innocent hand,
 Not painted with the crimson spots of blood.
 Within this bosom never entered yet

¹ *State.*] Royalty.

² *In the body, &c.*] K. John here likens himself to a disturbed state or kingdom. Compare *Julius Cæsar*, ii. 1 :—

‘The state of man
 Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
 The nature of an insurrection.’

And *Macbeth*, i. 3 :—

‘My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
 Shakes so my single state of man, that function
 Is smothered in surmise.’

The dreadful motion¹ of a murderous thought;
And you have slandered nature in my form,
Which, howsoever rude exteriorly,
Is yet the cover of a fairer mind
Than to be butcher of an innocent child.

K. John. Doth Arthur live? O, haste thee to the peers,
Throw this report on their incensed rage,
And make them tame to their obedience!
Forgive the comment that my passion made
Upon thy feature; for my rage was blind,
And foul imaginary eyes of blood
Presented thee more hideous than thou art.
O, answer not; but to my closet bring
The angry lords with all expedient² haste;
I conjure thee but slowly, run more fast. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.—*Before the Castle.*

Enter ARTHUR on the Walls.

Arth. The wall is high, and yet will I leap down.
Good ground, be pitiful, and hurt me not!
There's few, or none, do know me; if they did,
This ship-boy's semblance hath disguised me quite.
I am afraid; and yet I'll venture it.
If I get down, and do not break my limbs,
I'll find a thousand shifts to get away:
As good to die and go, as die and stay. [Leaps down.

¹ *Motion.*] Suggestion. So *Macbeth*, ii. 1:—

'Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream.'

² *Expedient.*] Expeditious.

O me ! my uncle's spirit is in these stones !¹
Heaven take my soul, and England keep my bones !

[*Dies.*

Enter PEMBROKE, SALISBURY, and BIGOT.

Sal. Lords, I will meet him at St. Edmund's-Bury ;
It is our safety, and we must embrace
This gentle offer of the perilous time.

Pem. Who brought that letter from the cardinal ?

Sal. The count Melun, a noble lord of France,
Whose private with me,² of the Dauphin's love,
Is much more general than these lines import.

Big. To-morrow morning let us meet him then.

Sal. Or rather then set forward : for 'twill be
Two long days' journey, lords, or e'er³ we meet.

Enter the Bastard.

Bast. Once more to-day well met, distempered lords :
The king, by me, requests your presence straight.

Sal. The king hath dispossessed himself of us.
We will not line his thin bestained cloak
With our pure honours, nor attend the foot
That leaves the print of blood where'er it walks :
Return, and tell him so ; we know the worst.

¹ *My uncle's spirit, &c.*] That is, the stones are possessed with the murderous spirit of my uncle. Arthur's death happened not in England but at Rouen, where he is said to have been drowned by jumping from the walls of his prison into the Seine.

² *Whose private with me.*] Whose private communication to me.

³ *Or e'er.*] So in Daniel vi. 24, 'And brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.' And in Ecclesiastes, 'Or ever the silver cord be loosed.' *Or* is still used in Scotland in the sense of *before*.

Bast. Whate'er you think, good words, I think, were best.

Sal. Our griefs,¹ and not our manners, reason now.

Bast. But there is little reason in your grief;

Therefore, 'twere reason you had manners now.

Pem. Sir, sir, impatience hath his privilege.

Bast. 'Tis true, to hurt his master, no man else.

Sal. This is the prison. What is he lies here?

[*Seeing ARTHUR.*

Pem. O death, made proud with pure and princely beauty!
The earth had not a hole to hide this deed.

Sal. Murder, as hating what himself hath done,
Doth lay it open, to urge on revenge.

Big. Or, when he doomed this beauty to a grave,
Found it too precious-princely for a grave.

Sal. Sir Richard, what think you? Have you beheld,
Or have you read, or heard? or could you think?
Or do you almost think, although you see,
That ² you do see? could thought, without this object,
Form such another? This is the very top,
The height, the crest, or crest unto the crest,
Of murder's arms: this is the bloodiest shame,
The wildest savagery, the vilest stroke,
That ever wall-eyed wrath ³ or staring rage
Presented to the tears of soft remorse.⁴

Pem. All murders past do stand excused in this:
And this so sole and so unmatched
Shall give a holiness, a purity,
To the yet-unbegotten sin of times;

¹ *Griefs.*] Grievances.

² *That.*] That which.

³ *Wall-eyed wrath.*] *Wall-eyed* is having eyes streaked with grey or greenish-white, whereby vision is perverted. Spenser (*F. Q. I. iv. 24*) calls the eyes of a goat 'whally eyes, the sign of jealousy.'

⁴ *Remorse.*] Pity.

And prove a deadly bloodshed but a jest,
Example¹ by this heinous spectacle.

Bast. It is a damned and a bloody work;
The graceless action of a heavy hand,
If that it be the work of any hand.

Sal. If that it be the work of any hand?
We had a kind of light what would ensue:
It is the shameful work of Hubert's hand,
The practice² and the purpose of the king:
From whose obedience³ I forbid my soul,
Kneeling before this ruin of sweet life,
And breathing to his breathless excellence
The incense of a vow, a holy vow,
Never to taste the pleasures of the world,
Never to be infected with delight,
Nor conversant with ease and idleness,
Till I have set a glory to this hand,⁴
By giving it the worship of revenge.

Pem., Big. Our souls religiously confirm thy words.

Enter HUBERT.

Hub. Lords, I am hot with haste in seeking you:
Arthur doth live; the king hath sent for you.

Sal. O, he is bold, and blushes not at death:
Avaunt, thou hateful villain, get thee gone!

Hub. I am no villain.

¹ *Exampled by.*] When judged of by comparison with.

² *The practice.*] The contrivance.

³ *From whose obedience.*] From obedience to whom.

⁴ *This hand.*] Arthur's hand. Pope substitutes *head* for *hand*.
The *head* was that which should have worn the crown; the *hand*,
that which should have swayed the sceptre.

Sal. Must I rob the law ? ¹

[*Drawing his sword.*

Bast. Your sword is bright, sir ; put it up again.

Sal. Not till I sheathe it in a murderer's skin.

Hub. Stand back, lord Salisbury, stand back, I say ;
By heaven, I think, my sword's as sharp as yours :
I would not have you, lord, forget yourself,
Nor tempt the danger of my true defence ; ²
Lest I, by marking of your rage, forget
Your worth, your greatnesss, and nobility.

Big. Out, dunghill ! dar'st thou brave a nobleman ?

Hub. Not for my life : but yet I dare defend
My innocent life against an emperor.

Sal. Thou art a murderer.

Hub. Do not prove me so ;
Yet, I am none. ³ Whose tongue soe'er speaks false,
Not truly speaks ; who speaks not truly, lies.

Pem. Cut him to pieces.

Bast. Keep the peace, I say.

Sal. Stand by, or I shall gall you, Faulconbridge.

Bast. Thou wert better gall the devil, Salisbury :
If thou but frown on me, or stir thy foot,
Or teach thy hasty spleen to do me shame,
I'll strike thee dead. Put up thy sword betime,
Or I'll so maul you and your toasting-iron, ⁴
That you shall think the devil is come from hell.

¹ *Must I rob the law.*] Must I take the law in my own hands, and inflict its penalty on you.

² *Nor tempt the danger, &c.*] This is in allusion to the wager of battle, which was an appeal to heaven's justice to determine by the issue of the combat the side of right.

³ *Do not prove me so, &c.*] Do not make me so, by provoking me to murder thee. As yet I am no murderer.

⁴ *Your toasting-iron.*] In *King Henry V.* ii. 1, Nym says 'I dare

Big. What wilt thou do, renowned Faulconbridge?
Second a villain and a murderer?

Hub. Lord Bigot, I am none.

Big. Who killed this prince?

Hub. 'Tis not an hour¹ since I left him well:
I honoured him, I loved him; and will weep
My date of life out, for his sweet life's loss.

Sal. Trust not those cunning waters of his eyes,
For villainy is not without such rheum;²
And he, long traded³ in it, makes it seem
Like rivers of remorse⁴ and innocence.
Away with me, all you whose souls abhor
The uncleanly savours of a slaughter-house;
For I am stifled with this smell of sin.

Big. Away, toward Bury, to the Dauphin there!

Pem. There, tell the king, he may inquire us out.

[*Exeunt Lords.*]

Bast. Here's a good world?—Knew you of this fair work?
Beyond the infinite and boundless reach
Of mercy, if thou didst this deed of death,
Art thou damned, Hubert.

Hub. Do but hear me, sir,—

Bast. Ha! I'll tell thee what;
Thou'rt damned as black—nay, nothing is so black;
Thou art more deep damned than prince Lucifer:
There is not yet so ugly a fiend of hell
As thou shalt be, if thou didst kill this child.

not fight; but I will wink, and hold out mine iron: it is a simple one, but what though? it will toast cheese.'

¹ *Hour.*] This word is here dissyllabic in pronunciation.

² *Rheum.*] This word is used by Shakspeare for tears, and sometimes for saliva.

³ *Traded.*] Practised.

⁴ *Remorse.*] Pity.

Hub. Upon my soul,—

Bast. If thou didst but consent
To this most cruel act, do but despair,
And, if thou want'st a cord, the smallest thread
That ever spider twisted from her womb
Will serve to strangle thee; a rush will be a beam
To hang thee on; or, wouldst thou drown thyself,
Put but a little water in a spoon,
And it shall be, as all the ocean,
Enough to stifle such a villain up.
I do suspect thee very grievously.

Hub. If I in act, consent, or sin of thought,
Be guilty of the stealing that sweet breath
Which was embounded in this beauteous clay,
Let hell want pains enough to torture me!
I left him well.

Bast. Go, bear him in thine arms.
I am amazed, methinks, and lose my way
Among the thorns and dangers of this world.
How easy dost thou take all England ¹ up!
From forth this morsel of dead royalty,
The life, the right, and truth of all this realm
Is fled to heaven; and England now is left
To tug and scramble,² and to part ³ by the teeth
The unowed ⁴ interest of proud-swelling state.
Now for the bare-picked bone ⁵ of majesty
Doth dogged war bristle his angry crest,
And snarleth in the gentle eyes of peace:

¹ *All England.*] That is, the body of Prince Arthur.

² *Scamble.*] Scramble.

³ *To part.*] To share.

⁴ *Unowed.*] Unowned; unlawfully held.

⁵ *The bare-picked bone.*] This refers to the reduced state of John, now deserted by so many of his nobles

Now powers from home,¹ and discontents at home,
Meet in one line; and vast confusion waits,
As doth a raven on a sick-fallen beast,
The imminent decay of wrested pomp.²
Now happy he whose cloak and cincture³ can
Hold out this tempest. Bear away that child,
And follow me with speed; I'll to the king:
A thousand businesses are brief in hand,
And heaven itself doth frown upon the land. [Exeunt.]

¹ *From home.*] At a distance from home; abroad. So in *K. Lear*, ii. 1, Regan, speaking of letters, says 'Which I best thought it fit to answer from our home;' and in *Macbeth*, iii. 4,—

'To feed, were best at home;
From thence, the sauce to meat is ceremony.'

² *The imminent, &c.*] That is, waits the imminent decay of John's sovereignty.

³ *Cincture.*] Belt or girdle. This is Pope's substitution for the old reading *center*.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Room in the Palace.*

Enter KING JOHN, PANDULPH with the Crown, and Attendants.

K. John. Thus have I yielded up into your hand
The circle of my glory.

Pand. Take again
From this my hand, as holding of the pope,
Your sovereign greatness and authority.

[*Giving JOHN the crown.*]

K. John. Now keep your holy word: go meet the
French;
And from his holiness use all your power
To stop their marches, 'fore we are inflamed.
Our discontented counties¹ do revolt;
Our people quarrel with obedience,
Swearing allegiance and the love of soul
To stranger blood, to foreign royalty.
This inundation of mistempered humour
Rests by you only to be qualified.²
Then pause not; for the present time's so sick,
That present medicine must be ministered,
Or overthrow incurable ensues.

¹ *Counties.*] Earls; lords.

² *Rests by you only, &c.*] Remains to be moderated or restrained
by you alone.

Pand. It was my breath that blew this tempest up,
Upon your stubborn usage of the pope;
But, since you are a gentle convertite,
My tongue shall hush again this storm of war,
And make fair weather in your blustering land.
On this Ascension-day, remember well,
Upon your oath of service to the pope,
Go I to make the French lay down their arms. [Exit.

K. John. Is this Ascension-day? Did not the prophet
Say, that before Ascension-day at noon,
My crown I should give off? Even so I have:
I did suppose it should be on constraint,
But, heaven be thanked, it is but voluntary.

Enter the Bastard.

Bast. All Kent hath yielded; nothing there holds out
But Dover Castle.¹ London hath received,
Like a kind host, the Dauphin and his powers:
Your nobles will not hear you, but are gone
To offer service to your enemy;
And wild amazement hurries up and down
The little number of your doubtful friends.

K. John. Would not my lords return to me again,
After they heard young Arthur was alive?

Bast. They found him dead, and cast into the streets:
An empty casket, where the jewel of life
By some damned hand was robbed and ta'en away.

K. John. That villain Hubert told me he did live.

Bast. So, on my soul, he did, for aught he knew.

¹ *But Dover Castle.*] 'This key to the kingdom was defended by Hubert de Burgh, with only 140 soldiers, for four months, against all the efforts of the French to take it.'—Trench's *Shakspeareana Genealogica*.

But wherefore do you droop? why look you sad?
Be great in act, as you have been in thought;
Let not the world see fear and sad distrust
Govern the motion of a kingly eye.
Be stirring as the time; be fire with fire;
Threaten the threatener, and outface the brow
Of bragging horror: so shall inferior eyes,
That borrow their behaviours from the great,
Grow great by your example, and put on
The dauntless spirit of resolution.
Away, and glister like the god of war,
When he intendeth to become the field:
Show boldness and aspiring confidence.
What, shall they seek the lion in his den,
And fright him there? and make him tremble there?
O, let it not be said!—Forage,¹ and run
To meet displeasure farther from the doors;
And grapple with him, ere he come so nigh.

K. John. The legate of the pope hath been with me,
And I have made a happy peace with him;
And he hath promised to dismiss the powers
Led by the Dauphin.

Bast. O inglorious league!
Shall we upon the footing of our land
Send fair-play orders,² and make compromise,
Insinuation,³ parley, and base truce,

¹ *Forage.*] Bestir yourself to seek means. In the North the word is still understood in this sense.

² *Send fair-play orders.*] Send and receive ambassadors under guarantee of their being fairly treated, according to the laws of war. So in the next scene, the Bastard says to the Dauphin—

‘According to the fair-play of the world,
Let me have audience; I am sent to speak.’

³ *Insinuation.*] Ingratiating proposals.

To arms invasive? shall a beardless boy,
A cockered silken wanton, brave our fields,
And flesh¹ his spirit in a warlike soil,
Mocking the air with colours idly spread,
And find no check? Let us, my liege, to arms:
Perchance the cardinal cannot make your peace,
Or if he do, let it at least be said,
They saw we had a purpose of defence.

K. John. Have thou the ordering of this present time.

Bast. Away then, with good courage; yet, I know,
Our party² may well meet a prouder foe. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—A Plain, near St. Edmund's Bury.

*Enter in arms, LEWIS, SALISBURY, MELUN, PEMBROKE,
BIGOT, and Soldiers.*

Lew. My lord Melun, let this³ be copied out,
And keep it safe for our remembrance:
Return the precedent⁴ to these lords again,
That, having our fair order written down,
Both they and we, perusing o'er these notes,
May know wherefore we took the sacrament,
And keep our faiths firm and inviolable.

Sal. Upon our sides it never shall be broken.
And, noble Dauphin, albeit we swear
A voluntary zeal and an unurged faith
To your proceedings, yet, believe me, prince,

¹ *Flesh.*] Elate.

² *Yet, &c.*] I know that even yet our party, reduced though it be, &c.

³ *This.*] The written covenant between the Dauphin and the revolted English barons.

⁴ *The precedent.*] The original.

I am not glad that such a sore of time
Should seek a plaster by contemned revolt,
And heal the inveterate canker of one wound
By making many. O, it grieves my soul,
That I must draw this metal from my side
To be a widow-maker; O, and there,
Where honourable rescue and defence
Cries out upon the name of Salisbury:
But such is the infection of the time,
That, for the health and physic of our right,
We cannot deal but with the very hand
Of stern injustice and confused wrong.
And is't not pity, O my grieved friends,
That we, the sons and children of this isle,
Were born to see so sad an hour as this;
Wherein we step after a stranger, march
Upon her gentle bosom, and fill up
Her enemies' ranks, (I must withdraw and weep
Upon the spot¹ of this enforced cause,)
To grace the gentry of a land remote,
And follow unacquainted colours here?
What, here?—O nation, that thou couldst remove!
That Neptune's arms, who clippeth thee about,²
Would bear thee from the knowledge of thyself,
And grapple³ thee unto a pagan shore;
Where these two Christian armies might combine
The blood of malice in a vein of league,
And not to-spend⁴ it so unneighbourly!

¹ *Upon the spot.*] At the stain, shame, or discredit.

² *Who clippeth thee about.*] Who encircles or embraces thee.

³ *Grapple.*] The old text has *cripple*.

⁴ *To-spend.*] So in *The Merry Wives*, iv. 4.

'Then let them all encircle him about,
And, fairy-like, to-pinch the unclean knight.'

Lew. A noble temper dost thou show in this;
And great affections, wrestling in thy bosom,
Do make an earthquake of nobility.
O, what a noble combat hast thou fought
Between compulsion and a brave respect!
Let me wipe off this honourable dew,
That silverly doth progress on thy cheeks:
My heart hath melted at a lady's tears,
Being an ordinary inundation;
But this effusion of such manly drops,
This shower, blown up by tempest of the soul,
Startles mine eyes, and makes me more amazed
Than had I seen the vaulty top of heaven
Figured quite o'er with burning meteors.
Lift up thy brow, renowned Salisbury,
And with a great heart heave away this storm;
Commend these waters to those baby eyes
That never saw the giant world enraged;
Nor met with fortune other than at feasts,
Full warm of blood, of mirth, of gossiping.
Come, come; for thou shalt thrust thy hand as deep
Into the purse of rich prosperity,
As Lewis himself:—so, nobles, shall you all
That knit your sinews to the strength of mine.
And even there, methinks, an angel spake:
Look, where the holy legate comes apace,
To give us warrant from the hand of heaven

To is not here the sign of the infinitive, but an intensifying prefix that was very common in ancient times. It occurs frequently in Chaucer, as in the prologue to the *Wife of Bath*—‘Mote thy wicked necke be to-broke;’ and in the *Monk's Tale*, ‘He slowe and all to-rent the lion.’ So in Spenser, *F. Q.*, ‘Made of strange stuff, but all to-worn and ragged.’ Milton, in *Comus*, 380, speaks of wings that ‘were all to-ruffed,’ and in Scripture (Judges ix. 53) we have, ‘And all to-brake his skull.’

And on our actions set the name of right,
With holy breath.

Enter PANDULPH, attended.

Pand. Hail, noble prince of France !
The next is this,—King John hath reconciled
Himself to Rome ; his spirit is come in,
That so stood out against the holy church,
The great metropolis and see of Rome ;
Therefore thy threatening colours now wind up,
And tame the savage spirit of wild war ;
That, like a lion fostered up at hand,
It may lie gently at the foot of peace,
And be no further harmful than in show.

Lew. Your grace shall pardon me : I will not back ;
I am too high-born to be propertied,¹
To be a secondary at control,
Or useful serving-man and instrument,
To any sovereign state throughout the world.
Your breath first kindled the dead coal of wars
Between this chastised kingdom and myself,
And brought in matter that should feed this fire ;
And now 'tis far too huge to be blown out
With that same weak wind which enkindled it.
You taught me how to know the face of right,
Acquainted me with interest to this land ;²

¹ *To be propertied.*] To be used by another as if I were his property.

² *Acquainted me with, &c.*] Made known to me my interest in relation to this land. Pandulph had said to Lewis :—

‘ You, in the right of Lady Blanch your wife,
May then make all the claim that Arthur did ! ’ (iii. 4.)

In 2 *K. Henry IV.* iii. 2, the king says to the Prince of Wales :—

‘ He hath more interest to the state than thou.’

Yea, thrust this enterprise into my heart ;
 And come you now to tell me, John hath made
 His peace with Rome ? What is that peace to me ?
 I, by the honour of my marriage-bed,
 After young Arthur, claim this land for mine ;
 And, now it is¹ half-conquered, must I back,
 Because that John hath made his peace with Rome ?
 Am I Rome's slave ? What penny hath Rome borne,
 What men provided, what munition sent,
 To underprop this action ? Is't not I
 That undergo this charge ? Who else but I,
 And such as to my claim are liable,
 Sweat in this business, and maintain this war ?
 Have I not heard these islanders shout out,
Vive le roy !² as I have banked their towns ?³
 Have I not here the best cards for the game,
 To win this easy match played for a crown ?
 And shall I now give o'er the yielded set ?
 No, no, on my soul, it never shall be said.

Pand. You look but on the outside of this work.

Lew. Outside or inside, I will not return
 Till my attempt so much be glorified,
 As to my ample hope was promised
 Before I drew⁴ this gallant head of war,
 And culled these fiery spirits from the world,

¹ *Now it is.*] Now that it is.

² *Vive le roy.*] What is called the silent *e* at the end of a French word, as in *Vive*, has often a slight sound in poetry, and here forms a syllable in the verse.

³ *As I have banked their towns.*] Staunton thinks it probable that *banked* here means won, as in a game of cards. Other commentators suppose the meaning to be *passed by the banks of*. Staunton's conjecture seems to be confirmed by the words in the third line farther on.

⁴ *Drew.*] Raised, levied.

To outlook conquest, and to win renown
Even in the jaws of danger and of death.—

[*Trumpet sounds.*]

What lusty trumpet thus doth summon us ?

Enter the Bastard, attended.

Bast. According to the fair play of the world,
Let me have audience : I am sent to speak,
My holy lord of Milan, from the king :
I come to learn how you have dealt for him ;
And, as you answer, I do know the scope
And warrant limited¹ unto my tongue.

Pand. The Dauphin is too wilful-opposite,
And will not temporize with my entreaties ;
He flatly says he'll not lay down his arms.

Bast. By all the blood that ever fury breathed,²
The youth says well.—Now hear our English king ;
For thus his royalty doth speak in me.
He is prepared, and reason too he should :
This apish and unmannerly approach,
This harnessed³ masque, and unadvised revel,
This unhaired⁴ sauciness, and boyish troops,
The king doth smile at ; and is well prepared
To whip this dwarfish war, these pigmy arms,
From out the circle of his territories.
That hand which had the strength, even at your door,

¹ *Limited.*] Prescribed ; dictated. So in *Macbeth*, ii. 2, 'I'll make bold to call, for 'tis my limited service.'

² *Fury breathed.*] Breathed fury.

³ *Harnessed.*] Armed. Compare *Macbeth*, v. 5, 'At least we'll die with harness on our back ;' and 1 Kings xxii., 'A certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness.'

⁴ *Unhaired.*] Unbearded.

To cudgel you, and make you take the hatch ;¹
 To dive, like buckets, in concealed wells ;
 To crouch in litter of your stable planks ;
 To lie, like pawns, locked up in chests and trunks ;
 To hug with swine ; to seek sweet safety out
 In vaults and prisons ; and to thrill and shake
 Even at the crying of your nation's crow,²
 Thinking this voice an armed Englishman :
 Shall that victorious hand be feeble here,
 That in your chambers gave you chastisement ?
 No ! Know, the gallant monarch is in arms,
 And, like an eagle o'er his airy, towers,
 To souse³ annoyance that comes near his nest.
 And you degenerate, you ingrate revolts,
 You bloody Neros, ripping up the womb⁴
 Of your dear mother England, blush for shame :
 For your own ladies and pale-visaged maids,
 Like Amazons, come tripping after drums ;
 Their thimbles into armed gauntlets change,
 Their needs to lances, and their gentle hearts
 To fierce and bloody inclination.

Lew. There end thy brave,⁵ and turn thy face in peace ;

¹ *Take the hatch.*] Leap as a frightened dog over the half-door, instead of remaining to defend the premises. Turberville says of Cupid :—

'He trained me all by trust, I fared as hound at hatch ;
 The lesser fruit I found, the more I was procured to watch.'

In *K. Lear*, iii. 6, we have, 'Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.'

² *Of your nation's crow.*] Of your nation's crowing. The point of this lies in the double meaning of the Latin word *Gallus*, which signifies either a cock or a Frenchman.

³ *To souse.*] To plunge down upon.

⁴ *Ripping up the womb.*] Agrippina was thus stabbed to death by her son Nero.

⁵ *Brave.*] Bravado.

We grant thou canst outscold us : fare thee well ;
We hold our time too precious to be spent
With such a brabblers.

Pand. Give me leave to speak.

Bast. No, I will speak.

Lew. We will attend to neither :—
Strike up the drums ; and let the tongue of war
Plead for our interest¹ and our being here.

Bast. Indeed, your drums, being beaten, will cry out ;
And so shall you, being beaten. Do but start
An echo with the clamour of thy drum,
And even at hand a drum is ready braced
That shall reverberate all as loud as thine ;
Sound but another, and another shall,
As loud as thine, rattle the welkin's ear,
And mock the deep-mouthed thunder ; for at hand
(Not trusting to this halting legate here,
Whom he hath used rather for sport than need,)
Is warlike John ; and in his forehead sits
A bare-ribbed death, whose office is this day
To feast upon whole thousands of the French.

Lew. Strike up our drums, to find this danger out.

Bast. And thou shalt find it, Dauphin, do not doubt.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*The same. A Field of battle.*

Alarums. Enter KING JOHN and HUBERT.

K. John. How goes the day with us ? O, tell me,
Hubert.

Hub. Badly, I fear : how fares your majesty ?

¹ *Our interest.*] Our claim to the sovereignty of England.

K. John. This fever, that hath troubled me so long,
Lies heavy on me ; O, my heart is sick !

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord, your valiant kinsman, Faulconbridge,
Desires your majesty to leave the field,
And send him word by me which way you go.

K. John. Tell him, toward Swinstead, to the abbey there.

Mess. Be of good comfort ; for the great supply
That was expected by the Dauphin here
Are wracked three nights ago on Goodwin sands.
This news was brought to Richard but even now ;
The French fight coldly, and retire themselves.

K. John. Ay me ! this tyrant fever burns me up,
And will not let me welcome this good news.
Set on toward Swinstead ;¹ to my litter straight :
Weakness possesseth me, and I am faint. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*The same. Another part of the same.*

Enter SALISBURY, PEMBROKE, BIGOT, and others.

Sal. I did not think the king so stored with friends.

Pem. Up once again ; put spirit in the French :
If they miscarry, we miscarry too.

Sal. That misbegotten devil, Faulconbridge,
In spite of spite alone upholds the day.

Pem. They say, King John, sore sick, hath left the field.

¹ *Towards Swinstead.*] Swineshead and Swinstead were two distinct places, both in Lincolnshire : at the former was the abbey of Cistercian monks where John is supposed to have died.

Enter MELUN, wounded, and led by Soldiers.

Mel. Lead me to the revolts¹ of England here.

Sal. When we were happy² we had other names.

Pem. It is the count Melun.

Sal. Wounded to death.

Mel. Fly, noble English, you are bought and sold ;
Unthread the rude eye of rebellion,³
And welcome home again discarded faith.
Seek out King John, and fall before his feet ;
For, if the French be lords of this loud day,
He⁴ means to recompense the pains you take
By cutting off your heads : thus hath he sworn,
And I with him, and many more with me,
Upon the altar at St. Edmund's-Bury,
Even on that altar where we swore to you
Dear amity and everlasting love.

Sal. May this be possible ? may this be true ?

Mel. Have I not hideous death within my view,
Retaining but a quantity of life
Which bleeds away, even as a form of wax
Resolveth from his figure 'gainst the fire ?⁵
What in the world should make me now deceive,
Since I must lose the use⁶ of all deceit ?

¹ *To the revolts.*] To the revolted barons.

² *Happy.*] Fortunate.

³ *Unthread the rude eye, &c.*] Retrace your revolting steps ; undo what you have done.

⁴ *He.*] The Dauphin. We should perhaps read *lord* in the preceding line.

⁵ *Even as a form of wax, &c.*] This is an allusion to the practice of witches, who formed a wax figure of a person they designed to injure, and placed it before the fire, with the assurance that the object of their enmity would waste away as the wax figure did.

⁶ *The use.*] The advantage.

Why should I then be false, since it is true
That I must die here, and live hence by truth?
I say again, if Lewis do win the day,
He is forsworn if e'er those eyes of yours
Behold another day break in the east.
But even this night,¹—whose black contagious breath
Already smokes about the burning crest
Of the old, feeble, and day-wearied sun,—
Even this ill night your breathing shall expire,
Paying the fine of rated treachery,
Even with a treacherous fine of all your lives,
If Lewis by your assistance win the day.
Commend me to one Hubert, with your king;
The love of him,—and this respect besides,
For that my grandsire was an Englishman,—
Awakes my conscience to confess all this.
In lieu whereof,² I pray you, bear me hence
From forth the noise and rumour of the field;
Where I may think the remnant of my thoughts
In peace, and part this body and my soul
With contemplation and devout desires.

Sal. We do believe thee.—And beshrew my soul,
But I do love the favour³ and the form
Of this most fair occasion, by the which
We will untread the steps of damned flight;
And, like a bated and retired flood,
Leaving our rankness⁴ and irregular course,
Stoop low within those bounds we have o'erlooked,⁵
And calmly run on in obedience,

¹ *But even this night.*] Only this very night.

² *In lieu whereof.*] In return for which; in requital of which.

³ *The favour.*] *Favour* means face, or aspect.

⁴ *Rankness.*] Rampancy.

⁵ *O'erlooked.*] Overrun.

Even to our ocean, to our great King John.
My arm shall give thee help to bear thee hence;
For I do see the cruel pangs of death
Right in thine eye.—Away, my friends! New flight,
And happy newness that intends old right.
[*Exeunt, leading off MELUN.*]

SCENE V.—*The same. The French Camp.*

Enter LEWIS and his Train.

Lew. The sun of heaven, methought, was loth to set,
But stayed, and made the western welkin blush,
When the English measured backward their own ground,
In faint retire: O bravely came we off
When with a volley of our needless shot,
After such bloody toil, we bid good night;
And wound our tottering¹ colours clearly² up,
Last in the field, and almost lords of it!

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Where is my prince, the Dauphin?

Lew. Here:—What news?

Mess. The count Melun is slain; the English lords,
By his persuasion, are again fallen off:
And your supply, which you have wished so long,
Are cast away and sunk on Goodwin sands.

Lew. Ah, foul shrewd news!—Beshrew thy very heart!
I did not think to be so sad to-night
As this hath made me.—Who was he that said

¹ *Tottering.*] Drooping.

² *Clearly.*] Clear of entanglement; closely.

King John did fly, an hour or two before
The stumbling night¹ did part our weary powers?

Mess. Whoever spoke it, it is true, my lord.

Lew. Well; keep good quarter and good care to-night;
The day shall not be up so soon as I,
To try the fair adventure of to-morrow. [Exeunt.

SCENE VI.—*An open Place in the Neighbourhood of
Swinstead Abbey.*

Enter the Bastard and HUBERT, meeting.

Hub. Who's there? speak, ho! speak quickly, or I shoot.

Bast. A friend.—What art thou?

Hub. Of the part of England.

Bast. Whither dost thou go?

Hub. What's that to thee?

Why may not I demand of thine affairs,
As well as thou of mine?

Bast. Hubert, I think.

Hub. Thou hast a perfect thought;
I will, upon all hazards, well believe
Thou art my friend, that know'st my tongue so well.
Who art thou?

Bast. Who thou wilt: an if thou please,
Thou mayst befriend me so much as to think
I come one way of the Plantagenets.

Hub. Unkind remembrance!² thou and eyeless night³

¹ *The stumbling night.*] This is metonymy for the night that causes stumbling. 'But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth.'—John xi. 10.

² *Unkind remembrance.*] Unnatural reminding.

³ *Eyeless night.*] Night that prevents vision. Another example of metonymy, like 'the stumbling night.' Theobald substituted *eyeless* for the old reading *endless*.

Have done me shame :—brave soldier, pardon me,
That any accent breaking from thy tongue
Should 'scape the true acquaintance of mine ear.

Bast. Come, come ; sans compliment, what news abroad ?

Hub. Why, here walk I, in the black brow of night
To find you out.¹

Bast. Brief, then ; and what's the news ?

Hub. O, my sweet sir, news fitting to the night,
Black, fearful, comfortless, and horrible.

Bast. Show me the very wound of this ill news ;
I am no woman, I'll not swoon at it.

Hub. The king, I fear, is poisoned by a monk :
I left him almost speechless, and broke out
To acquaint you with this evil, that you might
The better arm you to the sudden time,
Than if you had at leisure known of this.

Bast. How did he take it ? who did taste to him ?

Hub. A monk, I tell you ; a resolved villain,
Whose bowels suddenly burst out : the king
Yet speaks, and, peradventure, may recover.

Bast. Who didst thou leave to tend his majesty ?

Hub. Why, know you not the lords are all come back,
And brought prince Henry in their company ?
At whose request the king hath pardoned them,
And they are all about his majesty.

Bast. Withhold thine indignation, mighty heaven,
And tempt us not to bear above our power !
I'll tell thee, Hubert, half my power this night,
Passing these flats, are taken by the tide,²
'These Lincoln washes have devoured them ;

¹ *Here walk I, &c.]* I walk abroad to find you out with your night-darkened visage.

² *Half my power this night, &c.]* The Bastard here describes as happening to himself that which really befel the king.

Myself, well mounted, hardly have escaped.

Away, before! conduct me to the King.

I doubt¹ he will be dead or e'er I come.

[*Exeunt*]

SCENE VII.—*The Orchard of Swinstead Abbey.*

Enter PRINCE HENRY, SALISBURY and BIGOT.

P. Hen. It is too late; the life of all his blood
Is touched corruptibly; and his pure brain
(Which some suppose the soul's frail dwelling-house)
Doth, by the idle comments that it makes,
Foretell the ending of mortality.

Enter PEMBROKE.

Pem. His highness yet doth speak; and holds belief,
That being brought into the open air
It would allay the burning quality
Of that fell poison which assaileth him.

P. Hen. Let him be brought into the orchard here.—

Doth he still rage!

[*Exit* BIGOT.]

Pem. He is more patient
Than when you left him; even now he sung.

P. Hen. O vanity of sickness! fierce extremes,
In their continuance, will not feel themselves.
Death, having preyed upon the outward parts,
Leaves them insensible; and his siege is now
Against the mind, the which he pricks and wounds
With many legions of strange fantasies;
Which, in their throng and press to that last hold,
Confound themselves. 'Tis strange that death should sing!
I am the cygnet to this pale faint swan,

¹ *I doubt.*] I fear. The word was formerly often used in this sense.

Who chants a doleful hymn to his own death ;¹
And, from the organ-pipe of frailty, sings
His soul and body to their lasting rest.²

Sal. Be of good comfort, prince ; for you are born
To set a form upon that indigest,
Which he hath left so shapeless and so rude.³

*Re-enter BIGOT and Attendants, who bring in KING JOHN
in a Chair.*

K. John. Ay, marry, now my soul hath elbow room ;
It would not out at windows, nor at doors.
There is so hot a summer in my bosom,
That all my bowels crumble up to dust :
I am a scribbled form, drawn with a pen
Upon a parchment ; and against this fire
Do I shrink up.

P. Hen. How fares your majesty ?

K. John. Poisoned,—ill fare ;—dead, forsook, cast off ;
And none of you will bid the winter come,
To thrust his icy fingers in my maw ;
Nor let my kingdoms rivers take their course
Through my burned bosom ; nor entreat the north
To make his bleak winds kiss my parched lips,
And comfort me with cold :—I do not ask you much,
I beg cold comfort ; and you are so strait,
And so ingrateful, you deny me that.

P. Hen. O that there were some virtue in my tears
That might relieve you !

¹ *Who chants, &c.*] This refers to the poetic fancy that the swan sang at the approach of death. So in the *Merchant of Venice*, iii. 2, 'Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end, fading in music.'

² *Sings his soul and body, &c.*] Sings his own requiem.

³ *That indigest, &c.*] 'Rudis indigestaque moles.'—Ovid, *Metam.* i.

K. John. The salt in them is hot.
Within me is a hell ; and there the poison
Is, as a fiend, confined to tyrannize
On unreprievable condemned blood.

Enter the Bastard.

Bast. O, I am scalded with my violent motion,
And spleen¹ of speed to see your majesty.

K. John. O cousin, thou art come to set mine eye :
The tackle of my heart is cracked and burnt,
And all the shrouds wherewith my life should sail,
Are turned to one thread, one little hair :
My heart hath one poor string to stay it by,
Which holds but till thy news be uttered ;
And then all this thou seest is but a clod,
And module of confounded royalty.

Bast. The Dauphin is preparing hitherward,
Where, Heaven He knows,² how we shall answer him :
For, in a night, the best part of my power,
As I upon advantage³ did remove,
Were in the washes, all unwarily,
Devoured by the unexpected flood. [*The KING dies.*]

Sal. You breathe these dead news in as dead an ear.
My liege ! my lord !—But now a king—now thus !

P. Hen. Even so must I run on, and even so stop.
What surety⁴ of the world, what hope, what stay,
When this was now a king, and now is clay !

¹ *Spleen.*] Keen hastiness. Compare what Hubert (p. 34) says about the gates of Angiers opening 'with swifter spleen.'

² *Heaven He knows.*] Or, *God He knows.* These forms of expression are often found in Shakspeare.

³ *Upon advantage.*] Taking an advantageous opportunity.

⁴ *What surety.*] What surety is there !

Bast. Art thou gone so? I do but stay behind
To do the office for thee of revenge;
And then my soul shall wait on thee to heaven,
As it on earth hath been thy servant still.
Now, now, you stars¹ that move in your right spheres,
Where be your powers? Show now your mended faiths;
And instantly return with me again,
To push destruction and perpetual shame
Out of the weak door of our fainting land:
Straight let us seek, or straight we shall be sought;
The Dauphin rages at our very heels.

Sal. It seems, you know not then so much as we:
The cardinal Pandulph is within at rest,
Who half an hour since came from the Dauphin;
And brings from him such offers of our peace
As we with honour and respect may take,
With purpose presently to leave this war.

Bast. He will the rather do it, when he sees
Ourselves well sinewed to our defence.

Sal. Nay, 'tis in a manner done already;
For many carriages he hath dispatched
To the sea-side, and put his cause and quarrel
To the disposing of the cardinal;
With whom² yourself, myself, and other lords,
If you think meet, this afternoon will post
To consummate this business happily.

Bast. Let it be so.—And you, my noble prince,
With other princes that may best be spared,
Shall wait upon your father's funeral.

¹ *You stars, &c.*] By *stars* are meant the barons who have returned to allegiance.

² *With whom, &c.*] That is, to consummate this business happily with whom, yourself, &c.

P. Hen. At Worcester must his body be interred;
For so he willed it.

Bast. Thither shall it then.
And happily may your sweet self put on
The lineal state and glory of the land!
To whom with all submission, on my knee,
I do bequeath my faithful services
And true subjection everlastingly.

Sal. And the like tender of our love we make,
To rest without a spot for evermore.

P. Hen. I have a kind soul, that would give you thanks,
And knows not how to do it, but with tears.

Bast. O, let us pay the time but needful woe,
Since it hath been beforehand with our griefs.
This England never did, nor never shall,
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
But when it first did help to wound itself.
Now these¹ her princes are come home again,
Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue,
If England to itself do rest but true. [*Exeunt.*

¹ *Now these.*] Now that these.



